

Honoring God in an Impossible Place

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of honoring God and relying on His power in seemingly hopeless situations.

Duration: 58:57

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:14, Psalm 139:23-24, Proverbs 24:30-34, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Daniel 11:32, Joel 2:28-32, Acts 4:31, Revelation 2:7

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Resurrection Power"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for the Church of Jesus Christ to rise up in a generation where society is rapidly declining morally, socially, and politically. The speaker calls for a return to honoring God in the midst of seemingly impossible circumstances, highlighting the power of the Holy Spirit to bring life and unity to a divided and lifeless church. The message challenges believers to seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit, to prophesy faith and life into their situations, and to stand boldly as a testimony of Christ's resurrection power in a darkened world.

Transcript

I want to talk to you this morning about honoring God in an impossible place. There are certain things that you and I are called to be. A standard, may I call it that, of Christ that we're called to achieve or attain life that God promises.

But for various reasons we find ourselves in a place of no strength. Less than no strength sometimes it seems. Not just individually but sometimes even corporately.

We're living in a generation where it seems like the church of Jesus Christ has largely lost its effect in this society. One of our politicians said this week that our nation is going to hell in a handbasket. We're sliding so quickly, not a Christian person either said that.

We're sliding so quickly morally, socially, politically into uncharted water. That we really need to learn how to honor God in this impossible place. The church of Jesus Christ must rise again in this generation.

There is no option B. The church must come back to life and I believe I have something along those lines. Ezekiel chapter 37, if you will please. Honoring God in an impossible place.

Now Father I thank you God with all my heart. Lord Jesus you delight in taking things that are not. Things that are nothing and calling them other than what they are.

This is the source of our strength. It's the source of our life. It's our hope for the present.

It's our tomorrow. God that you will take us in our nothingness. You'll take us in our frailty and our failing.

You put your Holy Spirit upon us and change us. We'll be changed into that which you have determined will bring honor to your own name through us. I yield my body to you this morning Lord and I ask you God to give me your thought.

I ask you Lord for your people. That within the sounds of your words Lord God there be life in this sanctuary. And those that are listening online and those that are at home and in Roxbury.

I pray Father with all my heart. Jesus Christ call us back to life. Lord you're the only one that can do this.

You're a God who raises the dead. That's what the cross is about. It's about a dead man living.

And Father we thank you Lord that no matter how dark the days are. No matter how dismal the picture might be to our natural eye. There's something of the Holy Spirit.

There's something in the heart of God. And you won't keep it a secret to those who know you and love you. You will speak to us God before you do what you have determined to do.

Would you please give us ears to hear today. You yourself said to the churches in Revelation. Whoever has ears to hear let him hear.

Oh God give me ears to hear. Give this congregation the ears to hear you. Lord I thank you for it in Jesus name.

Ezekiel chapter 37. Honoring God in an impossible place. The hand of the Lord was upon me.

And carried me out in the spirit of the Lord. And set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. And caused me to pass by them round about.

And behold there were very many in the open valley and lo they were very dry. And he said to me son of man can these bones live? And I answered oh Lord God thou knowest. Again he said unto me prophesy unto these bones and say to them.

Oh you dry bones hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God unto these bones. Behold I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live.

And I will lay sinews upon you. And will bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin. And put breath in you.

And you shall live and you shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied there was a noise behold a shaking.

And the bones came together bone to his bone. And when I beheld lo the sinews and the flesh came up upon them. And the skin covered them above.

But there was no breath in them. Then he said unto me prophesy unto the wind. Prophesy son of man and say to the wind.

Thus saith the Lord God come from the four winds oh breath. And breathe upon these slain that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me.

And the breath came into them and they lived and stood up upon their feet. An exceeding great army. Now it's been the pattern of humanity.

That we find ourselves again and again facing the impossible. In the church of Jesus Christ. Throughout history we've often found ourselves inwardly confused and outwardly defeated.

Because we folded our hands we stepped back from the true work of God. We fell spiritually asleep. And ultimately were robbed of our strength.

In Proverbs chapter 24. From the new living testament let me read to you the words that Solomon wrote. I walked by the field of a lazy person.

The vineyard of one lacking sense. I saw that it was overgrown with thorns. It was covered with weeds and its walls were broken down.

Then as I looked and thought about it I learned this lesson. A little extra sleep. A little more slumber.

A little folding of the hands to rest. And poverty will pounce on you like a bandit. Scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

We fell asleep folks as a church age. We became slothful. We moved away from the true work of God.

Which is the honoring of Christ. The supernatural walk of the Holy Spirit. The moving to see the masses that are living in darkness.

And headed for an eternity without God. Brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. We moved from the compassion of God that was exhibited on the cross to an inward focus.

We allowed theological perspectives to be developed in the church of Jesus Christ. That largely turned the body of Christ inward. People coming to the house of God.

Day after day. Hour after hour. Week after week.

Looking for some new thing for ourselves. Only to find that while we were self-focused as a church age. The enemy came in unknown through holes in the breach or the wall.

And literally is robbing this entire generation of its hope and its future. I'm personally appalled at the immorality that is abounding now in our nation. It is shocking to see it.

I thank God that I know Christ. For those who don't know Christ it must be absolutely overwhelming. The senseless violence that our young people who we've allowed to be raised and told there is no God.

And set them down in front of violent videos and sensual videos. Now we're surprised at what they're becoming. Now we're looking for solutions.

To an inescapable evil that has come within our borders. Selfishness has abounded to the point where there are no longer. There are very few statesmen left.

And immorality has gotten to the point that absolutely proven lewd men are able to run for political office. Unthinkable. Unbelievable.

That they would even be serious contenders at any point in this process. Morality has gone to the wind. Family is dying all around us.

What's wrong is becoming right. And what's right is becoming wrong. And it's happening actually quite quickly.

At an accelerated pace now. As a church of Jesus Christ we are called to be that power. That force of God in the earth.

That pushes back. That restrains. The lawless heart of those who do not know God.

Who actually fight against their own salvation. Who give in to that inward corrupt nature. That says I can be as God.

And I can make a determination of what is evil and what is good. And somehow I'm still going to arrive at a utopian end. Whether it be here on the earth or even if there's any thoughts of the hereafter.

But suddenly we find ourselves with a cry to honor God. And we find ourselves in an impossible place. This is exactly what confronted this prophet Ezekiel.

And it's a type of what I believe God is speaking to us today. Now these words of course apply to the nation of Israel. And we're seeing it fulfilled in part today.

And will be fully fulfilled in the days ahead. God took the prophet Ezekiel. And it says he took me in the spirit.

And he caused me. In other words he took me out over this huge valley. And he caused me to pass by these bones round about.

And there were very many in the open valley. And they were very dry. And the word open in that context means there was lifelessness on their face.

There was no sense of expectancy for the future. They were expressionless. That's really what it means.

They were opened to the display of their own powerlessness. Now these were religious people folks. These people were not.

They didn't set out to be spiritually dead. They didn't set out to be immoral. They didn't plan on dying around the altars they built.

But that's exactly what happened. And they were very dry. And the word dry means they had the sterility of a eunuch.

In other words they were incapable of producing life or reproducing. And this is where we live today. Not all thank God.

I'm not bringing an indictment against the church. You've got to hear me. I'm speaking as a man whom God has burdened my heart for his whole church.

The whole body. Everyone called by the name of Jesus Christ. There are no exclusions to this.

But if we're going to become what God would have us to be, we have to get to the point of agreeing with God concerning what we are. We've got to come to that place. And I've always said that the end of the natural is the beginning of the supernatural.

When we finally just agree with God, we stop making excuses for the fact that we have 120 churches in certain towns and cities and can't change our own block. Yet at the beginning of the church 120 people changed the whole known world. And at some point there has to be an honest evaluation of the heart.

We can't be afraid of that. You can't be afraid of it and I can't be afraid of it. David, the king of Israel, cried out, Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my ways. And if there's something in me that isn't right, God, lead me in the paths of life. That was the cry of his heart.

And I don't think we should be afraid to cry that. And say, Lord, show me. I want to honor you, but I find myself in an impossible place.

I can barely get up in the morning. And living for you and seeing the loss come to Christ seems to be almost an impossibility. And he said, Can these bones live, Ezekiel? Now it takes absolutely no faith to say no.

Anybody can do that. Anybody can live on the side of unbelief. You don't have to know scripture.

You don't have to have any strength of character. It takes no strength to live on the side of unbelief. Those who just say it can't be done.

And God asks Ezekiel an impossible question. The bones of the testimony of Christ in the earth are scattered. They're dysfunctional.

They're powerless. And he says, Can these bones live? And Ezekiel said, Oh, God, you know. It reminds me of the parable of the loaves and fishes.

Where Jesus turns to Philip and says, Philip, where are we going to find bread to feed these people? And the scripture says, He said this to test them because he already knew what he was going to do. He had a young boy there who had faith. And that's all that God ever requires is somebody to have faith to do the miraculous again.

And he said to Ezekiel, prophesy to these bones and say to them, Oh, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. These are bones who, by their own testimony later on in this chapter, they said we're dry. Our hope is gone.

We're cut off from the promises that were once ours. We somehow failed. God must be angry with us.

The Lord says, No, Ezekiel, prophesy. That means speak to them or sing to them by divine power. Be willing, Ezekiel, to be considered a madman by those who lack understanding of the ways of God.

Isn't it amazing? Those who live in the natural will consider those who live in the supernatural madmen. When actually it's the opposite. I remember reading the story of the Walsh Revival in 1904.

And there was a young man called Evan Roberts. He was actually just a preacher in training. And he was a man of prayer.

And in prayer God told him there's going to be a great touch of the Holy Spirit come down on the nation of Wales. And it's going to spread from the nation of Wales. And it's going to touch much of the known world.

And in this little place called Moriah Chapel, I've been there in Wales, he got up and he started to preach this. And crowds started to gather, not because they believed him. They thought he was crazy.

And a lot of the ministerium who were involved in his training started coming in. And they would shake their heads as he would preach about this coming touch of God in the earth. And they would say what a tragedy.

He was such a fine young man. And we held out such hope for him. And yet he had heard from God.

And they couldn't fathom it. You see because with all of their degrees and all of their study and all the things that they prided themselves. Why would God speak to a young minister who was in charge of his Sunday school class? Why would God do that? Because that's what God always does.

That's the way he always has done things. Consider your calling, brethren. Not many mighty, not many noble.

Not many wise after the flesh. Not many strong. Not many of royal birth has God chosen.

But God's chosen the foolish things of this world. And things that are not to bring to nothing. Things that exist in their own strength.

That no flesh can glory in the presence of God. That's why today I'm so thankful for the thankfulness of others. But folks, realistically, I would have nothing.

I'd have nothing. I don't even know if I'd be alive today were it not for Jesus Christ. He has constantly taken me in my nothingness.

And somehow I just laid hold of it. From right in the beginning. I remember being in a church service.

The preacher was preaching. I don't even remember what the message was. But at the end of the message I got out of my seat.

I went down and I knelt at an altar. And I said, God, I have less than nothing to give you. I'm not a speaker.

I'm not a public speaker. I don't have a pedigree. I'm struggling with a lot of things myself.

Just trying to get free. But oh God, if you think you can use this life for your glory. I give it all to you.

You can have it all. Lead me. Take me.

Guide me. And so I'm aware today. I'm fully aware that God still takes nothing.

He still takes those things that are nothing in themselves to bring to nothing. Things that exist in their own strength. That no flesh can glory apart from in Jesus Christ.

I'd rather be considered a madman and speak for God than have the accolades of the whole world and be a madman in the sight of God. You think of Acts chapter 2 when Peter the apostle stood out in the crowd. Now what were these people in that upper room? Failures.

Every last one of them. Peter had boasted he'd failed. Everyone else, they ran.

They weren't there when Jesus needed them. Even after three years of the purest word. Of a visible demonstration of God.

They saw him walk on water. Peter even walked on water himself. They saw the miracles.

They knew the power of God but yet they ran. And so that whole room was filled with failures. And so who does God come to? Does he bypass them? Does he say, look you're all dead.

You made all these boasts. And look at the mess you've made. When you could have stood visibly and been a testimony of the power of God.

You all took off and you all ran and you all did your own thing. No. They were all together.

They knew that they were weak. They knew that they needed the strength of God. Folks, that is the key.

If we are bringing something to the table. If we have a measure of pride in our own accomplishments, in our own strength. We will never fully know the power of God.

The blessing of the Lord is for those who finally come to an end of ourselves. And say, Lord I just come to you as I am. I come to you in my brokenness.

I come to you in my hopelessness. I come to you in my failure. I come to you with my mess of all the years of my life.

And I bring the sum total of this mess to you. And I trust that you are able to raise it from the dead. And bring honor to your name through it.

And Peter stood out among the people. And many of the mockers in that crowd. When they saw these people come out.

These failures come out of that upper room. God gripped. Every last one of them God gripped.

Every last one of them suddenly infused with God's Holy Spirit. Suddenly infused with the life of God. The scriptures coming to life in their hearts.

Faith bubbling over like a spring within them. Just as Jesus had once promised. That out of their inward parts would flow a river of living water.

Every one of them given the ability to speak and do things. That they know didn't come from themselves. All speaking of the wonderful works of God.

Speaking of the future that God was going to give them. Speaking of things that God was about to do. As the Holy Spirit made it known to their hearts.

In spite of the fact that the mockers looked at them. And said these people are intoxicated. And Peter said no.

We are not drunken as you suppose. Seeing as it's but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

This is that. With once of these. One time years ago.

One of these supposed madmen got up and spoke in the name of God. And said something is going to happen in the last days. It will come to pass.

I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your sons and daughters will know the ways of God.

Your sons and daughters will not be bound. By what we can see with our natural eye. Or know with our natural mind.

There will be another voice speaking inside of them. Which they will learn to agree with. They will begin to speak the word of God with authority.

And speak to things that are not as if they are. They'll begin to talk to people and say this is what you are today. But I'm telling you this is what you're going to be tomorrow.

You let God's Holy Spirit come upon you. Your young men will see visions. In other words there will be something of the future given to those who belong to God.

They'll see something when all around is simply hopelessness. And your old men will dream dreams. In other words even the older will not be limited by age and lack of strength anymore.

Because they will understand this incredibly important principle in God's kingdom. It's not by might. It's not by power.

It's by my spirit says the Lord. Thank God for this understanding. And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath.

Blood, fire and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood. Before that great and notable day of the Lord comes.

And then in verse 38 and 39. And Peter said to them repent. And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children. Even unto all that are afar off.

Even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Afar off. We are afar off.

We are two thousand years afar off and we're in New York City. We're afar off from where this was spoken. But the promise is just as real to you and I today as it was the day it was spoken.

To those that are far off. In other words far into the future. Even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Turn. Turn. Turn from the ways of flesh.

That's what it means to repent. Have a change of heart. A change of mind.

Seek the kingdom of God first and His righteousness. And put off the flesh. And be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Admit in your heart. That's what baptism is folks. Going down under that water.

I die to who I thought I was. I die to the strength I thought I had. I die to my whole sense of self that I would try to infuse into the kingdom of God.

I die to this. But when I come up out of that water. I'm coming up with the life of another being lived inside of me.

I'm coming up with another source of strength. And another source of wisdom than my own life. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

And he says and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. You shall receive the Holy Spirit. I was preaching at a Baptist Presbyterian gathering one time.

And I said to the people gathered. Some of the ministers and other members of the congregation. I said would you agree with me.

That we need the Holy Spirit to do the work of God. And everybody nodded. And I said so I don't really care.

If you got to run around the block spitting into the wind. I don't really care. How you do this.

But I'm telling you. You and I need the Holy Spirit again. We need the strength of God.

We need the spirit of Almighty God. And we cannot be satisfied. Until God's Holy Spirit fills us.

Until we are gripped by the power of God. Because there is no other hope. For this generation we're living in.

Back in Ezekiel again chapter 37. In verse 7. So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied.

There was a noise. And behold a shaking. And bones came together.

Bone to his bone. As I began to speak wrong thinking began to fall away. And everything starts coming together.

And hope starts stirring within. And that is the cry of my heart for you today. That wrong thinking.

Starts to fall away. There's a noise in a sense. There's something begins to happen inside your heart.

And you begin to say God Almighty. I see now. Where my weakness has been.

I see the source of it. But oh God. If you call me.

If you call me Lord Jesus Christ to stand again. If you call me in my weakened condition to represent you. I will stand.

I will stand by the strength of God. And I will stand according to the word of God. In verse 8. Says when I beheld.

The sinews and flesh came up upon them. And the skin covered them above. But there was no breath in them.

The word breath is ruach. It means there was no creative word of God in them. And it also means air put in motion by divine breath.

They stood. But they yet weren't empowered. By the breath of God.

And the best way I can explain this. This incredible power. That comes from the breath of God.

Is right in the beginning. When God created the heavens and the earth. He spoke.

And it put something into motion that cannot be retracted. But by God himself. And when he speaks into your life.

There's something that's put into motion. The only thing that can stop it is unbelief. And God begins to declare through the promises.

That are in his word. I'm going to take you. And I'm going to make you into something much greater than you are.

And I'm going to set you up in this generation as a testimony. Of the fact that Jesus Christ is the son of God. And that he was crucified.

Broke the power of sin. Was raised from the dead. And now sits at the right hand of almighty God.

That was never meant to be relegated just to an argument. That was meant to be a visible testimony in the earth. And the visible testimony God gives to his church.

Is that you and I are made into much more. Than we could ever hope to be in our own strength. We change by the spirit of God.

Paul says from image to image and glory to glory by the power of God. We change. Old things in us pass away.

All things become new. We read this book. We see the promises of God.

And we receive these promises. As if it's the breath of God himself coming into our lives. And we look at it and say this is my promise.

And we begin to prophesy and say yes I might be a selfish man. I might be a selfish woman. But God has spoken to me.

And my nature is going to change. And I'm going to be generous. I'm going to be kind.

I might be fearful. But God's going to give me courage. And we stand in the power of the Holy Spirit.

With the words of God in our mouth. And begin to prophesy to our own future. We begin to declare that people are not going to go to hell when I'm still alive.

People are going to come to Christ. We prophesy that God has not given me a spirit of fear. I'm not cowering down anymore under the snickers of a generation headed for hell.

I'm going to stand in the power of God. And I'm going to speak the truth of God. And I'm not going to be ashamed of what God says.

I'm not going to be ashamed of who Christ is. And my life is going to be a demonstration of the fact that Jesus Christ is alive from the grave. Then he said to me, verse 9, Prophesy to the wind, prophesy son of man.

And say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. In other words, speak with faith towards Christ. Concerning every word that has come from his lips to you.

And claim the full victory. The four winds, in other words, surround me, O God. Surround me with what you say about my life and my future.

And cause me to live. God Almighty, don't let any other voice hit me from any side. Speak to me from the north, the south, the east and the west.

Call to the voice of God. Speak into my life and drive out fear and doubt and unbelief from my life. For O God, we are called to be a testimony in the earth.

And you said in the last days, and these are the last days. That you would send your Holy Spirit. The last days began the day that Christ rose from the dead and Pentecost came.

And we are still in those days. And the promise is still true and the promise is still real. Cause me to live.

I have a cry in my heart that never goes away. I realize that we are in a bad state in this generation. But thank God that we have God with us.

Thank God that he is willing to do what only God can do. Thank God that as his word starts to go forward, bone to bone. We allowed one of the things that was going on in Israel at this time is they were divided.

And if you go to the end of the chapter. The part of this awakening is that the division was going to die. And they were going to come together as one body again.

One testimony. And the cry of my heart is O God. Send your same Holy Spirit to us.

Send your Holy Spirit to the Methodist church, the Lutheran, the Presbyterian. My God. Salvation Army.

Independent, charismatic. My God. Send your Holy Spirit.

And give us the sense to understand that we need to be one again. We need to be one body. We need to rise up again for the sake of Christ.

Nehemiah said to the people. You're not just fighting for yourself. You're fighting for your children.

You're fighting for your families. You're fighting for your future. Every great touch of God that has ever come into the earth from the beginning of time has always involved a coming together of the true body of Jesus Christ.

Yes, there will always be skeptics on the periphery. There will always be naysayers. There will always be critics with their clean shirts and their clipboards standing on the sidelines telling the rest of us how to do it better.

But just ignore that. The body has got to come together again. And I thank God with all my heart.

I was in a prayer meeting this week of over 100 pastors from New York City. We come from all denominations and all backgrounds. But I want to tell you there came a shout of glory into that meeting that so blesses my heart and so blesses my soul.

And I don't care what name is over the door as long as the blood of Jesus is on the inside. Cause us to live, oh God, cause us to live in New York City. Cause your church to live.

That's got to be our constant prayer now. My God, there is no hope for the future if you don't cause us to live. Jesus, let us be willing to be considered madmen by this generation that we would stand with the vision of who you are and what you're able to do in this time in which we're living.

Oh, thank God for it with all of my heart. I have seen something, folks. I make no apology for it whatsoever.

I saw it 25, 35 years ago. Something God spoke into my heart. Something he was going to do before the end of my days.

A gathering of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people into the kingdom of God. All denominations. God visiting his church one more time.

In Acts chapter 4, there was a threatening against the testimony of Christ. And when they left that place of threatening, they gathered together. Verse 31 says, when they prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled.

Remember, the shaking is the first thing that happened. The shaking, the stirring. All these dead expressionless bones unable to reproduce in a sense and be the blessing that God had commanded them to be in the earth.

Now we're into the New Testament many years later. And when they prayed, the place was shaken. And they prayed and they said, Lord, you are God.

You created the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is. Lord, you're God. You're able to do anything.

You're able to. We are just a small force. That's all they were.

They're standing against a religious establishment that wanted them dead or in prisons. They're standing against a social system and time that was against the things of Christ. But they got together and prayed and said, you are God.

That's where our prayer has to start. You spoke and the worlds were created. You spoke and light came.

You spoke and animals were created. You looked at dust in the earth and you spoke and breathed and man became a living soul. You are God.

All things are possible to him who believes. You are God. You can do whatever you want to do, oh God.

There's no restriction to you. We are a speck in a universe. If we saw how small we really are and how big God really is.

You are God that began to pray. You are God. You made heaven and earth and the sea and everything that is in them.

Everything in heaven, everything in the earth and everything in the sea was created by the words of your mouth. Who by the mouth of your servant David said, why do the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? Why do those who are without God imagine that they can triumph over the testimony of Jesus Christ? In this or any other generation, the kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom you've anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together.

In other words, kings, rulers, Jew and Gentile are standing against this testimony of Jesus Christ at that time. And then they said something incredible. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

In other words, they're only operating within the boundaries Lord that you have allowed them to operate in. Right from the beginning of time, they can't do more than you allow them to do. And now Lord, behold their threatenings and grant to your servants with all boldness that we may speak your word.

By stretching forth your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And they spoke the word of God with boldness.

And the multitude of them that believed, now this is the coming together of the bones now, were of one heart and one soul. And neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own. But they had all things common.

I see that twofold. It's a physical thing, yes, as well. But it's also a spiritual thing.

Nobody was standing up and trying to take the preeminence. Everybody knew that what they had had been given to them of God. It was not their own.

And they held it all in common. Their testimony was we are the body of Jesus Christ. And we have been raised for this moment in time.

And God has given us of his Holy Spirit. And yet some may have giftings that are more public than others. But we all realize that everything we have has come from the hand of a benevolent Savior.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Great power.

They gave witness to the resurrection. Great power. That's the call, my brother and my sister, to your life today.

The call is no different. It doesn't say with great argument. Although there are people who do operate in the realm of apologetics.

I appreciate that. But in the early church it says great power. Great power.

And they were witnesses. They were visible demonstrations of the fact that Christ was alive. They were made into what they could never be, folks.

They were given what they could never possess. And they were taken where they could never go. And that's been the story of my life since coming to Christ.

It has been an awesome and incredible journey. But somehow I get the feeling that God has saved the best wine for the last part of this feast in my heart. There is a point of faith where you have to be willing to be considered a fool for Christ's sake.

There's a point of faith where those in the world without God will never understand it. And it says great grace was upon them all. Great grace.

Great grace. What was their testimony? I was dead and now I live. I was hopeless and now I have hope.

I was powerless and now Christ himself has made a testimony of his own life through me. I was confused and now I see. I was given to walking in agreement with the news media.

Then I turned it off and opened the Bible. And I saw something. I saw something that normal people, natural people don't see it.

I saw something that God was speaking. I saw something that God was longing to do. I saw a moment in history that God was willing to breathe again on the slain and call the bones back to life again.

I saw something. I saw something. Something of God.

Years ago we were in Jamaica and it was a three or four day evangelistic crusade in an area of the inner city of Kingston that had been given to violence for a minimum of 30 years. An area of 100,000 people, 100% unemployment. Six drug lords controlling the whole area, fighting for the supremacy in the drug trade.

It got so violent and so bad in this community that the government plowed down a 30 acre field between the six areas, the six little towns. And that was called no man's land. An unwritten law was created that no man was allowed to cross that land to the other side.

It was a buffer zone. Anybody who tried to cross was shot usually by people from the other side. And in the 30 years there were over 800 recorded murders on that field.

Those are the recorded ones. The people there told us there were a lot more than this. The Lord called us to set up a platform there and to have a four day crusade.

The Lord began to speak to my heart that he was about to destroy the power of violence and poverty and unemployment and he was going to do a miracle. And I remember we gathered the pastors together and I

began to speak these things and said listen, all I'm asking you to do is understand. God has spoken something to my heart and I fully believe it's going to happen.

There's going to be a revival in this area. There's going to be thousands saved and you're going to have to be there and be ready to disciple these people. I remember them looking at me and more than one got up and walked out of the meeting and said this guy's a madman.

It's crazy. It's a dangerous area to go in and people don't go there. The church people generally don't even go into that area.

I remember just before we set up the crusade we had to hire a mercenary soldier who was feared. He actually was a very tough guy. He worked in the area and we had to visit.

I didn't go but the head of our security did and visited all the six drug lords. You had to get permission to be in the area or they would kill you. There was no law there anymore.

The government tried to disarm them when the towers were hit here in 2001 and a lot of people had died but they had failed to disarm the area. This soldier, I remember riding in the car with him and he told me, in his exact words, you guys are nuts. You are completely nuts.

Nobody is coming out to this thing. You'd be lucky if you don't get half of yourselves killed here. He said you don't have any idea what you're dealing with.

I remember standing and preaching. It was on the second night. The people were so afraid they wouldn't come on the field.

There's only a little flock of Christian people and many of them are scared. The people on the periphery of this 30-acre parcel of land, I'm assuming it was told about five to six rows deep, but they won't come on the field because there's such a fear associated with it. I remember in the middle of my message, and I was speaking on Ezekiel 37, in the middle of the message the Holy Spirit came on me and I stood back and forgot for a moment where I was and just went to the throne of God and I began to cry for the people.

I just began to cry out and a weeping came on me and I cried out, O Holy Spirit, come. It's a moment like Ezekiel must have experienced of realizing this is hopeless if the Holy Spirit doesn't come. You've got to breathe on these slain that they may live.

And I can't explain to you, I just started crying out and I forgot where I was. It didn't matter anymore because I knew the hopelessness of the moment if God didn't intervene. And the weeping that came on me suddenly hit the front row of the people and just started going down the line, started going in the back.

One of the concessionaires who was way at the back of this field said there was standing beside me an absolute thug, and there were a lot of them in the area, who started to weep as well. I couldn't understand why, but a weeping came on the crowd, a weeping came on the people, and people started to come on to the field. I believe it was that night about 2,000 people came to Christ and people met at the altar.

They met at the front of the stage, people who had never seen each other before. They were meeting there. I was told there were as many guns as people on the field because most everybody, especially the young men, were armed.

It was just truly an amazing night, and then it progressed. By the third or fourth night, there were 14,000 people on that field. Many came to Christ.

The spirit of violence was broken. On that field today, the government has built beautiful houses, beautiful condominiums. There's a church there today and a children's playground on no man's land.

The Queen of England found out what was happening and donated personal money to build a pottery-making plant. There's unemployment offices. There's a computer education center.

People are lined up to find work. All by the Holy Spirit coming. God doing the impossible.

I honestly believe that the Lord in part let that happen to me because of this day we're living in now. For I see something again. I see it in my spirit.

I see God about to do something in New York City. I can't fully explain it. I just see it in my heart.

All I can say is I was willing to stand on that platform and appear to be a madman. I'm willing to do it again today. I don't care what anybody says.

It makes no difference to me. I'd rather die on the side of faith than live in unbelief. And I thank God on the way home on the last night, Mr. Tough Guy, Mr. Mercenary Soldier was in the car and he kept saying, I don't believe it.

I just don't believe it. I just don't believe what is happening here, what has happened here. And I said, are you ready to give your life to Jesus Christ? And you know what he said to me, Mr. Eat Bullets for breakfast in the morning? I've got to go home and ask my wife.

I wish I could say I was rather unsure. I had a really good laugh in the car. Oh, Mr. Tough Guy, Mr. Eat Nails for breakfast has to go home and ask his wife if he can give his life to Jesus Christ.

But he was serious. He had seen a miracle. It takes no faith to live in unbelief, folks.

It takes nothing whatsoever. And so you and I can lay in the field and just lament our powerlessness, lament our nation, lament where it's going, lament what our youth are becoming. We can carry on with our powerless sermons, our powerless if there's even any prayer going on anymore.

Or we can start to hear the word of the Lord. Say, God, you're going to have to give me the power to live for something outside of myself. You're going to have to give me courage to face this generation.

But, Lord, you promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. That is your promise. You said it's to this generation and to as many as shall call out, even in far off places.

Without the Holy Spirit, there will be no awakening. We have brought the best to the table that we know how. We've brought our physical strength.

We've brought our natural intellects. We've brought our best laid and sincere plans. But now, in the words of one of our senators, we're heading for hell in a handbasket.

Now is the time for the Church of Jesus Christ to rise up. But we don't need a new plan, and we don't need a new superstar. We need the Holy Spirit.

And I want to give you a challenge today. This will be an altar call, but it's a challenge. Lord Jesus Christ, make me into everything that you have destined me to be.

Speak to me from the four sides. Call to the four winds. Let it be only your voice that I hear, and give me the courage to stand.

Those who know their God, the Scripture says through Daniel, will be strong and do exploits. Those who know their God, those who clearly know who God is, in the midst of a darkened time, will be given the strength to stand and shine like lights in the darkness. This is a momentous time in the United States of America.

I speak particularly to this country. I speak to the churches that are across this nation, from the east to the west and the north and the south. There is an opportunity to rise up and be the church of Jesus Christ again, and to repair the breach in this wall.

And I don't know if this society will look a whole lot like it has in the past, but I do know one thing, that if the church will rise up, there will be a testimony that cannot be denied, and many will find Christ as Lord and Savior. Every house of God will be full again. People will no longer be able to walk by and cast the testimony of the church under their feet, as if it was a salt with no savor.

This is a call from the heart of God. I don't know how else to say it. I don't know whether to say it loudly or softly.

I don't know what it will take for people to hear. But we are living in a moment where God is willing to give power to those who ask. But we have to be a people who ask, and we have to be willing to live for a purpose outside of ourselves.

And we have to care enough for the glory of God, that we'll be willing to be considered fools, and even threatened again, in our time. But my prayer is, at 60 years of age now, Jesus, make me everything that you have destined my life to be. That's the cry of my heart now.

Everything. It's where I started, and it's where I want to finish. I want to finish like the prophet of God who was telling the king, strike the ground with an arrow.

On my deathbed, I want to be speaking faith to whoever can still hear. And I challenge you with everything in my heart. We must rise up, folks.

If we don't, in 10 years from now or less, you're not going to recognize this country anymore. And if it takes terrific persecution to bring us to our senses, then that's what will have to happen. But we're living in a moment.

We're living in a moment where God says, I'm willing to come to you if you're willing to come to me. And Father, I thank you, Lord, for the power to deliver your heart today. And I ask you, in Jesus' name, that you give us the courage to stand up and admit our need.

Give us the courage to hear your word and to follow the journey you've laid out for our feet. Give us the courage, Lord Jesus Christ, to fight for so many young people who don't even know there is a God. Give us the courage to follow the direction you put before us and to be the people you call us to be.

Give us the courage to love one another and not be divided anymore. Give us the courage to face the onslaught of opposition that we'll have to face. But God Almighty, for your namesake and for your glory, make us everything that you've destined us to be.

And I thank you for it, Father, in Jesus' name. We're going to stand and worship for a moment. If the Lord's spoken to your heart today, and that's the cry of your heart, Lord, make me into everything you've called me to be.

Even if you feel dead and hopeless, just come. Just come. In the balcony, go to either exit.

In the annex, you can step between the screens in the same in the Roxbury. And for people at home, just kneel down in your living room. Fathers, ask for the blessing of God on your home.

Lord, make us everything. All that really matters now for each of us at this altar is what God is speaking to us and what God is speaking about us. And you have to do like Ezekiel once did.

You have to lift your hands to God and just say, Holy Spirit, come at me from all sides. Drive out every voice that comes to tell me my failings and frailties and accuse me before my God. Drive out these voices that speak about only my weakness and not the strength of God.

Drive out the sense of hopelessness. For you are still God. Nothing has changed.

And though everything around me rages, yet, Lord, you are well able to raise me again and cause my life to shine in this darkened day. Could you lift your hands to the Lord, everybody who's here, and let's spend four or five minutes. Just call out to God now.

Call out to the Holy Spirit unashamedly and ask him, ask him to speak to you. Do it by faith. By faith.

Oh, God, speak to us, Lord. Speak to every heart. The things that only you can speak, Lord.

No one else knows but you and the person you're speaking to. I know the plans that I have for you, you said, to bring you to a desired end. Oh, God, thank you.

Hallelujah. Now take a couple of minutes. Let's pray for the churches in New York City.

Pray for churches by name, churches that you're aware of in the city. Pray for them by name. Pray in faith.

Father, we thank you, Lord God. We thank you, Father. We thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for bringing your body together.

We thank you, Lord, for enabling us to hear your voice. We thank you, God, for raising a testimony that could only come from the hand of God. We thank you for breaking down all the barriers and bringing bone to bone by the Spirit of God.

We thank you, Lord, for faith arising in your heart. Thank you, Lord God, for preachers of the gospel all over the city. God, give them a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit.

This morning, Lord, as we pray, we ask you to come, Holy Spirit. Come to the streets of our city, oh God. Come to your house, Lord.

Come, oh God, like a rushing mighty wind. Come, Lord, as only you can. My God, my God, my God, my God.

Come to every church of every denomination, Lord. You can raise the dead. You can raise the dead.

You can raise places that died. Their testimony died. People are there, but they've died.

But you can raise the dead. That's who you are. That's the God we pray to this morning.

That's what we're asking for. One more time, from heaven's throne, Jesus Christ, Son of God, stand up and call Lazarus out of the grave one more time. Stand up, oh God, in our generation, Lord, and call your church back to life again.

My God, my God, my God. Send your Holy Spirit to your house. Oh, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Knock down the barriers of division. Knock down, Lord, stubbornness. Knock down the pride of accomplishment, Lord.

Bring it all down. My God, make it level ground in your house and bring us back to life. My Jesus, my Jesus, do something so profound in New York City that the whole world, the whole world will have to stop its insane march to hell and stop and say, have you heard what God is doing in New York City? Have you heard churches are filled all over the city? You can't get in.

There's so many people trying to get in. God is meeting with His people. God is touching lives.

God is setting people free. The glory of God has come into our borders. Let it be, oh God.

Let it be, Lord, in this generation. Oh, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. For your holy namesake, oh God.

For your namesake, Lord, in this generation. And for those who died to save, Lord. God Almighty, come and do what we could never do.

Give us the strength we could never have. Glory, glory, glory, glory to the name of Jesus. Glory to the name of Jesus.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

Thank you, God. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, God Almighty. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. Put faith in our hearts, Lord.

Put faith in our prayers, oh God. Father, we thank you for it. And we bless you in Jesus' mighty name.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. Give Him a shout of praise in this house.

And glory. God, we believe you. Hallelujah.

My God, my God, my God, my God, my God. My God, my God, my God, my God. Send your glory again.

Send your glory one more time, Lord. One more time before you come again. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

Glory to the name of Jesus. One more time, give Him a shout of glory. God bless you.

Hallelujah.

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