

Hunting a Partridge in the Mountains

by Carter Conlon

The sermon explores the challenges of genuinely seeking God and the importance of yielding control to Christ through the metaphor of David and Saul's relationship.

Duration: 45:18

Scripture: 1 Samuel 26:12-20, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher starts by discussing the story of Saul in 1 Samuel chapter 17. Saul is facing a battle that he knows he cannot win, and he is filled with fear and uncertainty. However, a young boy named David, filled with faith and a desire to see God glorified, comes into the camp and takes Saul's spear and water bottle. This symbolizes David's recognition that there is a greater cause at hand, the glory of God, and that victory can only be achieved through God's strength. The preacher then relates this story to the cross of Jesus Christ, emphasizing that when we embrace the cross, we enter into a power and victory that is not our own, but belongs to Jesus who defeated the powers of darkness and brought healing and sight to our lives.

Transcript

Good morning, Times Square Church. If you'd turn with me, please, on your Bibles to the book of 1 Samuel in the Old Testament. I'd like to speak a message to you this morning entitled, Hunting a Partridge in the Mountains.

Hunting a Partridge in the Mountains. Oh God, Lord, if you don't build a house, we labor in vain. Holy Spirit of the living God, I implore you in the name of Christ to quicken this word to each of our hearts, to the hearts of those who will hear it in the future.

Lord, I know I have your word, and Father, I pray that you cover my frailty. Give me the ability to speak this clearly, Lord. I have only one desire, and that's to speak from your heart, that your heart be gladdened today.

Lord, I thank you for this with everything inside of me. Lord, I pray, God Almighty, let your will be done, and Father, ask it in Jesus' name. 1 Samuel chapter 26, Hunting a Partridge in the Mountains.

Verse 12, so David took the spear and the crews of water from Saul's bolster, and they got them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them. Then David went over to the other side and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great space being between them. And David cried to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? Verse 17, And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Verse 20, Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord. For the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains, hunting a partridge in the mountains. Now, a while ago, I had the opportunity of speaking with a pastor who was finding his way back to what God had once intended his life to be.

He spoke of a season in his life of trying everything he knew, of attending every new happening, which seemed to offer a new chance to get close to God. Now, only to find that each new pursuit was leaving him weaker, more discouraged, and more spiritually dry. He said to me, I was a seeker of God.

I was hungry for the things of God. And when they said to me, he is here, or he is manifesting his life over there, I was one of the first on an airplane or in a car, train, whatever, and I was there. He was already a successful pastor.

He was already pastoring a church that was well established and known in the area in which he was pastoring. But after all these pursuits of God, all this seeking, only leaving them weaker, discouraged, with an increasing dryness coming into his soul, he came to the wrong conclusion eventually. And the conclusion he came to is that God could not be found, and that lasting personal revival was just an illusion.

And he said in his heart, if this is who God is, I'm not interested in serving him in the ministry anymore. At this point in his life, he left the ministry, and for several years he returned to secular work. Now, the statistics today seem to be telling us that this man's experience is alarmingly being shared by many others.

Hundreds, if not in the thousands of pastors in our time are leaving the ministry now every month. Many of them having boasted in a sense of being seekers of God, many having traveled the roads and gone to great extent as it is to find Christ, and because they couldn't find Christ, can you imagine what happens to their congregations? The congregation seeing their pastor off to some new conference, some new convention, some new place where supposedly Christ is manifesting his glory, to come back more weakened, more dry, more discouraged. Now, the obvious conclusion that people sitting under this ministry would come to is that if my pastor can't find God, then he can't be found.

Now, why is it that we're coming to the end of a season in Christendom? I we have prided ourselves in being seekers of God. There even was a book, I never read it, but there was a book out a while back called God Chasers, apparently talking about the spirituality of chasing God all over the world. I didn't see the need because I saved myself the money and just went into my prayer closet and opened the word of God.

But we came through a season of apparently this never-ending seeking of God going on in the Christian church, and now have come to the place where there's so little fruit to show for it. I feel that I'm on good

ground today to say that I hear a cry. I can hear it in my prayer time.

It's a cry in the hearts of many of God's people around the world, and this cry is simply this. I have sought God in the only way that I've been taught to do it, in the way that I know how. But I feel exactly like the psalmist who cried out in Psalm 22 verses 1 and 2, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me? And from the words of my roaring, oh my God, I cry in the daytime, but you don't hear me.

It's as if you don't listen to me, and I'm crying out in the night, and I'm not silent. I've traveled apparently to where you are. I pursued you from mountain to hill, from place to place, wherever they said you were, that's where I headed out to try to find you.

But I can't find you. I can't lay hold of you. Why, Lord, can you tell me why is the cry of the psalmist? And it's a cry in many people's hearts today.

It's as if we've come to a screeching halt in all of our religious activity, and finally have come to the realization that with all of our seeking of God, we are not impacting our society. The way that we read in history, the way we see that the church ought to be having an influence and a power in the world today, we finally have had the sense, I believe, to stop and start asking the question, why have we been seeking you and you've not been answering us? Now there is something in this story of Saul and David that answers this question. So I want to look at this relationship between these two people as a type of yours and my relationship with Jesus Christ.

Let's start at the beginning. They first meet in 1 Samuel chapter 17. In that chapter, Saul is in a battle that he cannot win, and he knows he can't win it.

He's the king of the nation. He's the master of his own destiny at this point. But he's come up against an enemy, and he instinctively knows that this enemy is too strong for him.

He's trembling, and everybody following his leadership is trembling, and he's wringing his hands, and maybe even uttering a prayer. The scripture doesn't record it, but possibly in his heart saying, oh God, what am I going to do? How are we going to defeat this enemy that seems to be without number, and they stand taller and stronger than we do. In the midst of his dilemma, David, a type of Christ, came to him with words of assurance, courage, and faith.

And David said, don't let your heart fear. I'm going to go and fight this battle for you, and I'm going to win this battle. Now, it caused him to embrace a battle plan which he otherwise would not have if he had remained strong in himself.

And many here today, if you have the courage, and I have the courage to admit it, we would not have considered Christ if we had been able to keep on fighting in our own strength. If there were not something in us that we finally came to the realization that we can't win this battle in our own strength. And so, as the scripture says, we embraced as it is the foolishness of the preaching of the cross.

Foolish to natural men. Foolish to people who are, in a sense, charting their own course and living by their own strength. Suddenly, Saul embraces a foolish battle plan.

A young boy just filled with a heart of faith and a desire to see God glorified in the earth. Isn't that what Christ said? Father, glorify thy name. It was the first and foremost passion in the heart of the son of God

that the name of the father be glorified in the earth and the heart of the father be satisfied.

David walked into this camp where this man was being overwhelmed, and he saw, he said, no, there's a cause much bigger than your own strength. This is about the glory of God first, before it's about the souls of men. And you and I embraced the cross in our need, realizing we couldn't fight this battle in our own strength.

And as David went into the valley and, in a sense, decapitated the power of the enemy's army, Saul soon found himself in hot pursuit of the enemy, but it was the spoils of another man's victory. When you and I embraced the cross, we came into a power. We came into a victory that is not our own.

It belongs to Jesus Christ. He won this battle over the powers of darkness. He unlocked our prisons.

He brought healing to our wounded hearts. He gave sight to our blinded eyes. He gave courage to our weakened hands, and he strengthened our feeble knees.

Now suddenly we find ourselves as Saul was and his army careening down into the valley to face the giants, but only in the strength of another man's victory. And so you and I, at some point, came to Christ. And in 1 Samuel 18, chapter 18, verse 2, it tells us that Saul took David home at one point in his life, and he became part of his household.

And you came to Christ. I came to Christ. And we brought him--we didn't leave him at church.

Only religious people leave God at church. Born-again people and people with a living relationship with God take him home. And when you came to Christ, you took him home.

You came here on a Sunday night, perhaps, and you gave your life to Jesus Christ, and it was the first time ever you realized you couldn't fight this battle, and suddenly you felt a victory come into your heart, and you took him home, just like Saul took David home. David sat at Saul's table, and in the morning now, Christ is at your table, and you're starting to open the Bible, and you're spending some time with him. And as David the psalmist said, even in the presence of your enemies, he spreads a table before you.

And in the morning, you're getting the thoughts of God and the strength that God is willing to give, and you're opening the Word of God. And David, as was with Saul, is sitting at your table. Christ is at your table.

And also, the scripture tells us elsewhere that Saul benefited from David's skillful musicianship in his singing. Now, the Bible doesn't tell us, but it was most likely worship, because at the sound of worship coming from David's heart, remember the Bible says that the Lord says, I will rejoice over you with singing, and at the sound of worship, an evil spirit, which was troubling Saul, had to let him go. And many people, this is exactly your relationship with God.

And to a point, it was mine years ago. We've come to him for salvation. We've embraced his battle plan.

We've walked into another man's victory. Now, we are also in pursuit of our enemies, but only in the strength of Christ. We've taken Christ home with us.

We sit him down at the table. We open his Word, and we are so blessed by worship. Many here today, you came into this house heavy.

You come in oppressed. You come in, and your mind was in a tangled web of attacks and such like. But after worshiping the way we have this morning, you find your mind clear.

You find this evil has lost its hold. And so, you're exactly where Saul was in his relationship with David. You are, and I am often, exactly in the same place with Christ that Saul was with David.

And so, the question arises, what happened to that relationship? How did it turn into something other than what it was originally designed to be? You see, something happened, which began to separate David from Saul. And I want to suggest to you, in our generation, for anybody who can still hear this, that something has happened in our time that has begun to separate Christ from his church. And if we're wise, we'll hear this.

What happened? What happened? Why does he seem so far from me? Why am I pursuing him, and I can't find him? Why am I crying out to him, and he's not answering me? Now, 1 Samuel chapter 18, just go back from 26 to 18. We're going to begin to look at what happened in this relationship. 1 Samuel 18 and verse 5. I want you to think of this in context of you and Christ.

Your relationship is the church of Jesus Christ with him. And David went out with us, whoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely. And Saul sent him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

And it came to pass, as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul with tabris, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another, as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saint displeased him.

And he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands. And what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul, I David from that day forward. Now, here's my point.

Saul, at this point, he had all these things that so many of God's people have had. Everything I've talked about. We've won victory because of him.

We've been in pursuit because of his strength. He sat at the table. We've worshiped.

We've been blessed by this worship. But you see, Saul was still very much in control of his own life. And David was a wonderful addition to his kingdom.

And that's the way many people have seen Jesus Christ. That's actually the way he's been actually preached, unfortunately, in some of our time, in some of our generation. Add Jesus to your wonderful kingdom.

Add him to your wonderful plans. Add him to your wonderful career, your wonderful personality, your wonderful family, your wonderful self-image. Just add Jesus.

He's the power of God. The Son of God makes a wonderful addition to your kingdom. Saul is still very much in control.

And one day, it suddenly dawned on him this simple fact, David is increasing and I am decreasing. Remember, John the Baptist had this revelation. He said, he must increase and I must decrease.

Now, suddenly, it realizes that, hey, he hasn't come to be a wonderful addition to my kingdom. He's come to be the next king of my kingdom. And suddenly, something came into his heart.

You see, most people don't have a problem adding Jesus to their agenda. But the thought of him becoming king and we becoming his subjects is where the real struggle begins. Remember, in the Garden of Eden, what was the essential nature of sin that Satan showed into the human race? You can be as gods.

You can know what's good and what's evil. You don't have to be under the dominion of God. You can be equal or even superior to God, was really the veiled inference there.

That's the sin nature in man. And we open our heart, Christ comes in, and we don't mind the addition, but we don't want him being king of our kingdom. Some people, just like Saul, will not yield the throne.

They will not yield the throne of their lives, yet continue in their pursuit of Christ, as Saul did of David, but pursuing him only for the purpose of validating a throne, which they refuse to yield. Pursuing him, in a sense, to try to get him to agree with our way of seeing things about our future, about our lives. I don't know how many times I've had people come to me and are in the very depths of this struggle, feeling that Christ is asking something else of them, other than their own life plan, which they conveniently had added Christ to, and now suddenly are at a juncture.

Not too many people would have the courage to say, I'm just rejecting him. I'm walking away from him. Most everybody will continue on this pursuit of him, but only to validate themselves.

Does that make sense to you this morning? Let me just read it to you. Isaiah 58. Here's the people of God, and they said these words.

Why have we fasted, and it's as if you don't take any notice of it? Why have we afflicted our souls, and it's as if you take no knowledge, or it's not even come to your attention? And he answers. He said, Behold, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.

You shall not fast as you do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Now, God's own people were saying these words. Why do we seek you, and you hide from us? And he said, No, you fast for strife and debate.

In other words, you're seeking me to set your own ideas above the thoughts of God. You have a controversy as it is with God. You don't like what I speak to you.

You don't like the direction, so you're fasting for strife and debate, ultimately with God. Then, of course, with one another. And to smite, he says, with the fist of wickedness.

In other words, to beat down even God, to even make God come into this. That's why Saul was pursuing David. He wanted to beat him down.

He wanted David to acknowledge, You are not the king of this kingdom, I am. And to make your voice to be heard on high. In other words, to come out of the contest as king, the final and authoritative word on spiritual things.

And folks, that's why people can't find Christ in all of their pursuit. Because these very reasons that are in the scriptures are still alive. In our opening text, for Samuel 26 in verse 18, David said these words, Why does my Lord pursue thus after his servant? What have I done? What evil is in my hand? Why do you pursue me? He says, What evil? What is in my hand towards you that you found to be evil? Why are you after me? For what reason are you seeking me? What is the purpose of your journey? Saul, it's as if Saul was a very much a type of those that have pursued Christ.

It seems in our generation, he would get a report. He's over here, suddenly with 3000 men, he's over going around this mountain, then he get a report, he's over there. And then he's taking the 3000 going around that mountain.

And he can never find him. How frustrating that must have been. Always coming back empty, always coming back seeming like less of a king than when he set out apparently to find God.

And in verse 20, he says, Don't let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as one does hunt a partridge in the mountains. In other words, you're seeking me, but you can't find me.

Because I'm too small to be seen a flea in a sense with your natural eyes. And a partridge can camouflage itself. You can walk right by it.

Anybody here ever gone partridge hunting I have when I was young and you can walk right by it, it can make itself the same color as the leaves. It can be perched in a tree, you can't see it, it can be a foot away from you on the ground and you walk right by it. It sits completely still.

It's camouflaged and you don't see it. And David says, you're walking right by in a sense, and you'll never find me and you'll never see me. David had just come into the camp of Saul with one of his servants.

And the scripture says a deep sleep had fallen upon the Saul and the armies of what was supposed to be the armies of God. And he came into that camp and he took his spear, which is the symbol of his strength and his ability to make war. And he took his water bottle, which is that replenishment of God.

In the New Testament, it's that spring of living water that Christ promises to those who truly belong to him and are walking with him. And both of these things were taken by David into a far place. In verse 12, he says, so David took the spear and the cruise of water from Saul's bolster and they got away and no man saw it nor knew it, neither awaked for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.

To this church age, I want to say to you, in the Lord's stead, in your slumber, in your spiritual slumber, the Lord has come among you and taken your ability to conquer. And he's removed from you that which refreshes you. Then he called out from another mountain.

The scripture tells us there was a great gap between them. And David answered in verse 22 and said, behold, the king's spear, and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. In other words, you and I are mountain apart, but here it is if you want it.

Would you send one of the young men over to fetch it? Would be to God that Saul had a measure of humility in his heart at this point and said, no, David, no, David, I'll come and get it. I'm the one who should have been guarding it. I lost it.

I'm going to come over and get it. And I believe it was a wonderful opportunity for this man. It could have made a difference in history.

Had he walked over it, it would have been in a sense, bending his knee before the real king. David is the Christ type, obviously, because the very DNA of Christ was in this man. And Saul is a type of you and I and what the church can become when we start to walk in the stubbornness of our own will and our own reasoning, trying to add what we bring to the kingdom of God and trying to bring the kingdom of God in subjection to our will.

And David cried out as Christ is crying out to this generation from Calvary one more time. Here's your strength to make war. And here's the living water you're looking for.

Come and get it. But it requires a humility. Folks, you don't go up a mountain standing erect.

If you do, you'll fall over backwards. You've got to go up in a position of humility. And Saul just couldn't bring himself to lay hold of the spiritual principle in this.

Just as there are people in our day who will not allow Christ to be Lord of all. Therefore, their pursuit of him will be in vain. Seek him all you want.

Travel the world. Hear about a revival in some countries, some towns, some village, some place. Travel there all you want.

But if you and I are not willing for Christ to be Lord of all, our seeking of him is in vain. You end up coming home weak, empty, and dry and reach the wrong conclusion that Christ cannot be found and that revival in personal measure is just an illusion. Saul couldn't bend.

He ended up headless and nailed to a wall, which was just a physical expression of what had happened to him. He ended up turning to witchcraft because he could not hear the voice of God any longer. But in 1 Samuel 22, it talks about 400 men.

400 men who lacked direction. It says they were in distress. They lacked resources.

They were in debt. And there was a deep sense of unfulfillment in their lives. They were discontented.

And the scripture just says they got up and they headed to where David was. And I think the beauty of this whole thing is that they didn't have a hard time to find him. Saul with 3,000 men and some of the best spies and scouts perhaps that would be all over the countryside couldn't find David.

But 400 men in distress and debt and discontent just got up one day and said, enough of this. I'm going where the anointing of God has always been. I'm going where the strength of God is.

And they went into a cave as we are called in our generation to come outside of all the walls and join Christ, the writer of Hebrews says, outside the gate. They went outside of the system that has rejected him as Lord. And the scripture says, and he, that is David, became a captain over them.

In other words, when they went in the cave, they didn't come in in their own strength. They had none. They didn't come in with resources.

They were gone. They didn't come in with a plan. They went to get the plan and they sat in the sides of that cave.

And in their hearts, I believe they said this, I would rather die with David than live in the kingdom of Saul. I'd rather go if it means death. If it means being on what looks to be in our generation, the short end of the stick, I really don't care.

I really, it doesn't, I'm going where Christ is. I'm going where the power of God has been. And I can see these men coming into the cave.

I can see it as clearly as if I'm in the cave myself and they're sitting on the sides of that cave. And they know without the power of God, all of them are going to be history. They're not going to be able to survive.

There's too many against them. But one more time, they would say, David, tell us the story of when you came into the camp and Goliath would rise up in the morning. And for 40 days, he brought his voice of condemnation and challenge against the armies of Israel.

Tell us what happened. Tell us what it was that gave you the courage to go into that valley. Now, these are men who know they're empty.

They don't have a plan. They don't have any direction. They just simply know I've got to get back to where God is.

And they sat down in the sides of that cave and they listened to the words of David. And I can see it this day, David saying, I come into this camp and I saw my brothers, Eliab, the oldest that Samuel had once thought should be the next king of Israel, cowering in fear and Shammah, my other brother, cowering in fear and a third brother cowering in fear and the armies of Israel hiding behind bushes and saw the king trembling and something came into my heart. And I said, is not the honor of God at stake here? Is it right that the people of God cower before an evil generation and are of no report and have no voice and have no strength and have no power when the power of God is available and evident and real to those who genuinely seek God? David had sought God.

It was in a private place and the spirit of the Lord had come upon him and he had won some marvelous personal hidden battles, but it put a faith in his heart. God gave him a battle plan that doesn't make sense to those who are walking in the natural. Go down to a stream, he said, and pick five smooth stones out of that stream.

These are not jagged ones that would speak of something that is newer, but something that is old, something that has had the water of God washing over it for centuries, rounding out the rough edges, five stones. And I can hear David telling the men in the cave and saying, it was as if when I bent down to reach those stones, I felt like another hand was inside of mine, that somehow God was with me and I picked those five stones. And I don't know what it represented, but I kind of feel it represented something that God was going to do one day.

Perhaps, perhaps it represented the five-fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, those that were going to come to serve the body of Christ, not themselves, to serve the body and to teach the people about Christ until they came in the measure of the stature of the fullness of what we're to be as a church in our generation, not to serve themselves, but to serve the people. Glory to God. So I put those in the side of my bag and I stood on the top of that hill and this giant came out and one more time

challenged the armies of Israel, the giants of pornography, the giants of destroying the family as God has ordained it in the world, the giants, all the giants that want to just literally destroy a whole generation of youth that we're living in today.

And this giant came out and raised his voice and David would tell him, then the spirit of God came upon me. And I stood there and God began to speak through me and said, you come to me with a staff and a spear and with armor, but I come to you in the name of the Lord God of hosts. I come to you in the name of the God of Israel, the God that you have defied.

And this day, I'm going to take your head off of you and I'm going to feed your bodies to the vultures of the earth. Now he's speaking prophetically now. He was speaking about the vanquishing power of God over all evil in that generation.

And David would tell him, I ran in the strength of God into that Valley and saw that God had been faithful and true. The spirit of God came upon me. And I can just see these men saying day after day, tell us again, David, tell us again, David, tell us again until they began themselves to find the strength of God.

It's a type of those in our generation that say, I found him. I'm no longer searching. I've found it's not in living my own ways and trying to ramrod my own agenda into the kingdom of God and trying to preserve myself, but it's in being abandoned to the will of God.

And they found the strength. They followed in the footsteps of David, which is a type of those of us who are willing in our generation to follow in the footsteps of Christ. And they changed the course of history.

Can you picture these, these 400 just with David rejoicing as the ark of God is brought back into the center of Jerusalem. The Lord, one more time, one more time, just taking the weak, the discouraged, the disillusioned, but the honest, the sincere seeker of God, not trying to bring any agenda to God, but trying to find God's agenda and walk in that agenda in our generation. The same way that 120 people went into an upper room, they were not mighty.

They were not noble. They were not wise. They didn't have an army.

They didn't have the answer in themselves. And their savior had just been crucified, but they went into an upper room because they had a promise. God's power is going to touch you.

And you will be witnesses, living witnesses of the living Christ, beginning where you are and throughout all the known world. And they changed the course of history. All throughout history, we have time and again seen when an ordinary people go in and seek the face of God with honesty, that Jesus Christ be made Lord.

To find the fulfillment of these words that Jeremiah the prophet wrote in chapter 29, verse 13, you shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. You shall seek me and you shall find me. There's a cry in the heart of God for this generation, this generation of believer.

This is a crisis hour. We're in no less crisis than Saul and Israel were in the day of the Philistine giant. This is a crisis time.

We're in a crisis time such as Israel was in, in the day of Pentecost. And one more time, one more time is the cry of my heart. Oh God, one more time.

One more time out of every church, out of every denomination, out of every crowd that professes to know Christ. Oh God, one more time. One more time, let the 400 come.

One more time Lord, let the 120 go in the upper room. One more time, God, give us the courage to bend our knee to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. One more time, give us the power to drop our plans and get rid of our pride and to stop pursuing Christ to try to add him to some personal agenda.

One more time, let us bend our knee to the will of God unto the death if necessary. One more time. That's what it will take for this church age to have an influence in this generation.

There's no other plan, there's no other way, there's no other program. I think it's time for the whole seeking parade to come to a stop because the 400 had no trouble finding him. One more time, I simply yield the rights to my life.

I yield it all to the grave, to the end of whatever this life is supposed to be according to the plan of God. I give it to you Jesus and I ask you to take this life and use it for your glory. Whatever that means, wherever it leads me, whatever it is, no more coming into the prayer closet and presenting my plan.

Rather, I go in and find yours for my life and find the strength that you're willing to give to those who belong to you. Now Father, I have delivered your word. Lord, I have given what you gave me.

I'm asking you Lord Jesus Christ for the strength of heart to respond. No longer my will but thine. It's so simple yet so hard, so difficult to lay down what we think our lives should be.

But God, I am encouraged and I believe that you will give us the strength or you wouldn't give us this word. I ask you Lord, as we see this world spinning quickly out of control, that your church one more time, one more time, lay hold of the power of God and that we make a difference in our generation. God, give courage to your people.

Give courage to every heart. Let this be real. Let it be an honest and genuine response today.

And I thank you in Jesus' name. Now I'm going to give an altar call but I want you to hear me on this. Hear me clearly.

This could make the difference for you and for me as to how we finish this race. The altar call is so simple, Lord unto the death I'm yours. Guide my life and let my life count for your glory.

If that is you, if you are sincere in that, if that's something you feel the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart, I don't know the plan of God for you and most likely you don't either but God does and he will unveil it and he'll show you what that is and how it's going to lead you and you'll find strength, strength, great strength to be what you could never be in yourself. He is still willing to be God if we're still willing to be his people. As we stand and I'm going to ask you to make your way to this altar.

If this has spoken to your heart today, let's stand please in the balcony. Go to either exit in the annex if you'd step between the screens. Also in the Roxbury and those that are watching at home, you could just go to your knees please in your own living room.

Lord Jesus Christ, I'm yours to the death. Whatever it takes, wherever my life, wherever you lead my life, I want to make a difference. If that's the cry of your heart, join these that are already coming.

We'll worship for a few moments. Praise God. Praise God.

Father, God Almighty, revive your church, Lord. Begin in my heart. Lord, and those who can hear this word, revive your church, Lord, throughout New York City, throughout this country, throughout the world, Lord.

Whoever can hear it now, Lord, just revive your church. Hallelujah. We yield ourselves to this cause and we ask you to, as you always are, to be tender with us.

Lord, help us through our own struggles and frailties and our fears. Bring us to that place, Lord, where we're willing to sit with you in this hour and hear your voice, find your strength, and make a difference. You know, David said to Saul, he said, have one of the young men come over and get the spear and the water bottle.

As I said earlier, that's the ability to fight, the strength to fight, and the replenishing supply, the two things that we need in the Christian life. And it's only befitting, we have children here today being dedicated because in my heart, I feel like I'm saying, you know, we're not going to send them to get it, we're going to get it for them. We're going to pass on to this generation the strength of God, not point to it and tell them where to find it, but we'll go get it.

I want to be one of those young men that if I was in that army, I think I'd hopefully be one of those. I'll go get it. I'll climb that mountain.

I'm willing to bend my knee and I'll come back with the strength, the true strength of God and the replenishment of God for this generation. Praise God. Can I have this little one here? Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty, what a responsibility you've given to us.

We ask you, Lord, to give us the courage to find truth and life in Christ and Father, help us, Lord, to bring it home for these little ones. We ask you today to bless these children, bless their mothers and fathers and guardians and aunts and uncles and grandmas and grandpas and bless the body of Christ that we would take these children as treasures, Lord, and see them as you see them. Lord, it's insufficient that we simply point to where strength is.

We've got to bring strength to them and God give us the grace in our generation to stand up and to make a difference. Lord, you've done it in the past and I believe with all my heart one more time you'll do it again. Father, I thank you for the sincerity of those who've come to this altar.

Lord, you will not send anybody away empty. That's your promise. You said if you know how to give gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? God, we need your Holy Spirit.

We can't do this without you, Lord. We can't walk it without you. Father, we just thank you for the strength that you will give in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, Lord, bless us as we go today. Give us strength.

Let this word sink deep. Lord, there's mighty men and women here and it's just that some don't know it yet, but God, you'll make it known. We thank you for it with all our hearts today in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

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