

In the Day When I Cried

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of crying out to God for strength and the dangers of self-reliance in the Christian life.

Duration: 45:53

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 138:3, John 11:43-44, Galatians 3:3

Topics: "Dependence On God", "Humility Before God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of crying out to God in times of trouble and not relying on human ingenuity or strength. It highlights the need for humility, acknowledging our need for God's strength and victory in our lives. The story of King Asa serves as a cautionary tale, showing the consequences of turning away from God and relying on our own efforts. The message calls for a return to genuine dependence on God, seeking Him with all our hearts and souls.

Transcript

If you'll turn in your Bibles, please, to two passages of Scripture, Psalm 138, and then when you find that, go to 2 Chronicles, Chapter 16, and just leave a bookmark in that if you will. We'll start at Psalm 138, and then move to 2 Chronicles, Chapter 16. Now, Father, I thank you with all my heart, God Almighty, for your presence being here with us.

I thank you, Lord, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit, the strength that you give, the power that you put behind your word, the transformed lives that you are willing to give as we are willing to call out to you with honest hearts. I ask you, O God, that you would overshadow my frailties this morning, God, that you would speak through me as a vessel in your hand to your people. Let your kingdom come, let your will be done in our hearts today, O God, in full measure, just as you have sent your word to do.

Help us, Lord, to get beyond our struggles. Help us to get beyond the barriers that we have put or our enemies have put in front of us, to get us to conclude that there's only so far in you that we can go. God, help us as a church age to embrace you again, to embrace your word again.

Help us to go forward. Help us, O God, to unashamedly be able to cry out to you again, and we thank you for it in Jesus' name, amen. This message is entitled, In the Day When I Cried, Psalm 138, a Psalm of King David.

I will praise you with my whole heart. Before the gods, I will sing praises to you. I will worship toward your holy temple and praise your name for your loving kindness and your truth, for you have magnified your word above all your name.

In the day when I cried out, you answered me and made me bold with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth. Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.

Though the Lord is on high, yet he regards the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me. You will stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand will save me.

The Lord will perfect that which concerns me. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the works of your hands.

Now this Psalm 138 is a psalm of victory. It's written by King David, a man after God's heart who obviously knew the source of his strength. That one thing, above all else, that made him a man after God's heart is that he was a person who knew that God's heart was to give strength to those of us who in our need would call out to him.

That is the heart of God for you today. The heart of God is not waiting for you to find some magical formula or clap your hands just right or get your whole act together before he will bless you. He's looking to give you strength when you and I have the courage to recognize that it's his strength that we need.

And we realize that in ourselves we don't possess, I mean apart from God in us, we don't possess sufficient strength to even live a victorious Christian life. And David knew this all of his days. That's why he was called a man after God's heart.

It's not that he did everything perfect. We know from his history he made terrible mistakes along the road in his life. But yet still the testimony from God's mouth about this man is that he was a man after God's heart.

He had the courage and the humility to admit when he was in a mess and to call out to God for deliverance. Second Chronicle 16.9 says the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal towards him. Did you know that this morning? That God's eyes are on you this morning looking to show himself strong.

If you're struggling, if you're in prison, if you're hurt, if you're wounded, if you're failing, if you're faltering, if you're confused, if you're dead inside his eyes are on you today not for evil but for good. To give you victory, to give you a song, to give you something that can only come from him that ultimately our testimony, the whole kingdom of God folks is about dead people living. You know that.

That's what the kingdom of God is about. That's what makes this gospel completely different than anything else that is taught or thought about in this world is that in Christ we have life. We have resurrection life.

We have eternal life. We have abundant life. We have a full life.

Now most of us know that we desperately need God when we first come to him. Anybody say amen to that? I knew it. You know it.

You know you couldn't change without him. You couldn't get out of your prison. You couldn't change your patterns of behavior.

You couldn't tell the truth if your life depended on it. There are many, many people who you know I desperately needed God and you came to him in that desperation. Very, very few people answer an altar call for salvation clapping and jumping up and down.

Almost everybody is with tears and with wringing hands. That final admission, God I can't do this without you. I can't do this.

There's no way without your mercy. I can't save myself. I can't change myself.

I can't be the husband. I can't be the wife. I can't be the son.

I can't be the daughter, the employee, the person that you've obviously longed for me to be. I can't. And you found out that God's eyes were on you.

His heart was towards you. You found out you didn't have to plead with him to save you. He was more than willing to give you eternal life and to give you the promise that in Christ all things are made new and you became a new creation.

Thank God. It doesn't happen overnight, folks. You all know that, right? It doesn't happen overnight, but it happens.

The seed of life comes in and takes over from the death that once was at work inside all the members of your body. When we first came to him we knew, but we all have an inner fallen nature. Every one of us that wants in itself to be God.

Remember that was the theology that Adam and Eve bit into that you too can be as God is or as gods or judges if you want to go back to the original. And you can know what's good and you can know what's evil. You can be just as God is.

And what happens to many who walk with Christ for any amount of time is that we say, thank you for those first victories, Lord, but I can take it from here. It was all Jesus in the beginning. Then in the middle it ends up me and Jesus and then at the end it just ends up me, able to live a righteous life in my own strength.

And Paul said to the Galatian church in Galatians chapter three, verse three, are you so foolish having begun in the spirit? Are you now made perfect by the flesh? In other words, having needed God, having known that this life is a supernatural life, are you now going to perfect it or bring it to completion by human effort? What happened to you, Paul said to the Galatians? Who bewitched you? Who took you off the course of faith and brought you into this place where you think that you can be made holy by the amount of things that you do? You think that you can live a righteous life by human effort? Who took you off this pathway of knowing that this whole life is supernatural? It's God. Religion is heavy. It's boring.

It has no life to it. It's programmed. But if you live in the spirit, morning by morning, new mercies you see.

If you live in the spirit, you don't have to figure it out. You know who won the victory. You simply go to him with a heart that's dependent on him.

Remember, the Lord gives grace to the humble, but the proud he knows are far off. That means those who still are clinging to some vestige of goodness in themselves or human ability to work out your problem. 2 Chronicles 26 talks about a king called Uzziah.

And when you read that man's history, that king's history, he was wonderfully helped. He was given a mind to make inventions, weapons to defend the nation. He was, he was, it was amazing what God did through this man.

And verse 15 and 16 of chapter 26 says, he was marvelously helped until he became strong. And when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. It's, it's the dilemma of humanness.

It's the dilemma of the Christian church that we start out in a permitting. We need God. Every church starts that way.

We need God so desperately. We know we have no power or strength or future without him. Then God answers us and souls start coming into the kingdom of God.

And a building is able to be bought and programs are formulated. And then there's, and in the midst of all the blessing of the Lord, there's this transition that starts to take place. And suddenly the whole thing is moving.

And if without his presence to the point where in some cases his presence is lost and people are not even aware of what happened to them, so programmed, so used to success, and now it's no longer supernatural becomes natural. Everything is, is, is theologies of human effort to achieve a success that only Christ can give in a human's life. Now in second Chronicles chapter 16, there was a king called Asa, king of Judah.

I want to actually go back to chapter 14, second Chronicles chapter 14. And it starts out in verse one says, Asa his son reigned in his place and in his days, the land was quiet for 10 years. Verse two says he did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord.

He took away all of the false altars. He took away everything that took away the presence of God from among the people. Verse five says the kingdom was quiet under him.

Verse six, he built fortified cities. That's chapter 14 of second Chronicles. He built fortified cities in Judah.

The land had rest. He had no war in those years because the Lord had given him rest. Therefore he said to Judah, let us build cities and make walls around them and towers and gates and bars while the land is yet before us because we've sought the Lord our God.

We have sought him and he's given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered. Here's a man who starts out right.

He has a wholehearted dependence on God. God blesses him just the way he has blessed you and he has blessed me. And the scripture tells us he had an army of about 580 or so thousand men.

And suddenly an Ethiopian army in verse nine came out against him with an army of 1,000,000. So the odds are roughly two to one against him. And he went to the Lord in verse 11 and said, Lord, it's nothing for you to help, whether with many or with those of us who have no power.

Help us, O Lord God. Remember that prayer. Help us, O Lord God, for we rest on you.

That was his heart. Help me, Lord. I'm leaning on you.

Remember when you prayed that. Remember that. If that's been the cry of your heart, you've known the blessing of God.

Help me, God, for I lean on you. And in your name we go against this multitude. Help us, O God.

From the very beginning of my walk with God in those first years when I stood in my living room after nine years of suffering hell and panic attacks, I stood there only in the name of the Lord Jesus, unable to get out of that prison, unable to escape this fear that had gripped my entire being. And yet I stood there with the word of God, a half of a verse actually in the New Testament of God before us who can be against us, and with faith in a finished victory on Calvary. And I said, Satan, you can only kill me if God allows you.

And if he allows you to kill me, I'm going to heaven. So I win now. I win either way.

It doesn't matter. I said, you throw everything you've got at me, but I throw back now what I have at you. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I resist you.

And you know my story. You know that from the soles of my feet, I felt a heat hit my body, go through my legs, my torso, my chest, and out the top of my head. That's almost 40 years ago now, totally set free by the power of God.

I've traveled all over the world, preached the gospel to countless thousands of people. Oh, Lord God, we rest on you. We have no power.

Help us, Lord God. See, that's a cry that he will never turn away from. That's a cry that you and I must never be too proud to pray.

I think it's a cry that has to come back into the church of Jesus Christ again in our generation. When we look at the threatenings, when we see what's happening in our cities, we have to have the courage to say, oh, Lord God, we have no power to fight this. Help us, Lord, for we rest on you.

And in your name, we go against this multitude. Oh, Lord, you are our God. Do not let men prevail against you.

Asa cried out, oh God, don't let anything of this world be able to triumph over the testimony of who you are and what you are willing to do for those who call out to your name. He won a marvelous victory, marvelous victory. Not only did they defeat that army, but they brought home tremendous spoil after the victory.

And in chapter 15, verse 1, it says, the Spirit of God came upon Azariah, the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa and said to him, hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with him.

If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you. And the forsaking is not just saying we don't believe in God anymore.

When we read it, we think that's the tenor of it. But really what it means is if you turn away from trusting in him, if you turn away from crying out to him, believing that this is a supernatural walk with him, and you

start leaning on human ingenuity and human effort, you will lose the presence of God. For a long time, verse 3, Israel has been without a true God.

Now this is the prophet still speaking to Asa and without a teaching priest and without law. But when in their trouble, they turned to the Lord God of Israel and sought him. He was found by them.

And in those times, there was no peace to the one who went out nor to the one who came in. But great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the land. See there's no peace when we're not seeking Christ.

There's no peace when we're not calling out to him for victory. There's no peace when we're not simply declaring his victory and entering into that victory by faith. So nation was destroyed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity.

In other words, the Lord allows adversity to come to remind his people one more time. It's not by power. It's not by might.

It's by my spirit, says the Lord. It's not by human ingenuity. It's not by intellect.

And I'm not decrying intellect. I thank God for learning. Thank God for understanding.

But that learning and that understanding must bring us again to the power of God, must bring us again to that place of humility. But you be strong, verse seven, and do not let your hands be weak for your work shall be rewarded. And when Asa heard these words in the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and removed the abominable idols in all the land of Judah and Benjamin from the cities that he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim.

And then the scripture tells us he gathered the people to himself. They made sacrifice to God. Verse 12 of chapter 15 says they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.

And this man was so zealous about this that he made a decree that whoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel was to be put to death. It was that important to him, whether man or woman, it didn't matter. They took an oath before the Lord, verse 14, with a loud voice, with shouting trumpets and ram's horns, all Judah rejoiced at the oath for they had sworn with all their heart and they sought him with all their soul.

And he was found by them and the Lord gave them rest all around. He even took his own mother out of leadership because she had built some kind of an obscene idol in the vicinity of where she lived. Now we go to chapter 16.

In the 36th year of the reign of Asa, so now there's been a lot of prosperity. There's been a lot of spirituality. There's been a knowledge of truth and necessity of seeking God.

There's been victory. There's been spoil. I can't tell you how many people I have seen totally blow it at the end of their days.

How many walk with God? How many churches walk with God? How many individuals walk with God? And they had this testimony of his presence, his power, his victory. They started out like with Pastor David and this group of young students winning hundreds to Christ in impossible places. And then he gets to the 36th year of his reign.

Aren't we supposed to be getting smarter as we get older? Is it possible we get so used to the victory we start taking it for granted? We get so used to the fact that the presence of the Lord is here with us that we forget the presence of the Lord is here with us? As human beings, we all have a tendency to become bored with the familiar. That's what happened to, I believe with all my heart, that's what happened to Solomon. He got bored with the presence of God.

He got bored with the temple of God, the work of God, the fact that God wanted to answer prayer. He just got bored. And he started using this brilliant mind that God gave him to start raising up choirs and cattle and hedges and vineyards and waterfalls.

He started doing all this other stuff other than what he was called to actually do. And here is, it's the 36th year of the reign of Esau and Esau, the king of Israel, came up against Judah, chapter 16 and verse 1, and he built a stronghold to try to starve out the people of God. And we're not that far from this kind of a moment in history where, I don't know if you can feel it yet, but the encroachment of a godless society trying to press in on the church and saying, well, you'll practice your religion inside your own little city, but don't dare bring it outside the gates.

Don't bring it into the marketplace. Don't talk to us about your Christ. We're not interested in your viewpoint.

And so they built a fortified city to try to keep the people of God contained and really to starve them to death with inside the walls of their own boundaries. Now what does Esau do? What did he formerly do? He formerly went, I remind you, he went, he said, Lord, Esau cried to the Lord and said, Lord, it's nothing for you to help, whether with many or whether those who have no power, help us, O Lord God, for we rest on you. And in your name, we go against this multitude, O Lord.

You are our God. Do not let man prevail against you. And now we come to chapter 16.

What did Esau do? It says he went, in verse 2, it says, Esau brought silver and gold from the treasure of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and he sent to Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus. Now, basically what he did is he hired a foreign army with all the treasures that were in the house of God. He turned from trusting in God and he started trusting in his own ingenuity.

He instead of looking to the Lord where we all do in our poverty, he started looking to the wealth of what had come into his life because of what God had given him in the first place. And instead of turning to God, he turned to the treasure. He turned to human ingenuity.

And he hired the king of Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, hired a foreign king rather to come up, the king of Syria to come up against the king of Israel that was standing against him. And he won. And he took the spoils of that city that had been encamped against him.

His strategy worked, in other words. And then with it he built two cities. In verse 6, it says, with him he built Geba and Mizpah.

He turned to his own reasoning and he began to revel in his own victories. Can you hear him at the dedication of his cities? Cities that were built with his own reasoning, was built with his own strength. He probably gave the glory to God, but God wasn't even in it.

He never did pray. It's a type of when, as a church age, we have ceased to pray and we have tried to strategize our victories. And yes, some victories have been won.

It's not even debatable. He won this particular victory. But then the word of God comes to him again.

In chapter 16, verse 7, it says, at that time Hanani, the seer, came to Asa, king of Judah, and said to him, because you've relied on the king of Syria and not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubam a very huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to him.

In this you have done foolishly. Therefore, from now on, you will have wars. In other words, what you have accomplished is only temporary.

Enemies that should have been completely vanquished will come back at you again and again and again. You will have a constant fight on your hands because you relied on human ingenuity rather than on the power of God and the faithfulness of God. You can find yourself a theory about how to get free from something and you can form your seven strategies and you can actually apparently win a victory.

But what you will find is that enemy will keep coming against you and keep coming against you because you're not fighting against it as a spiritual battle, you're fighting against it with human effort and human ingenuity. Now look at his response. Unlike David the king, who when reproved by Nathan the prophet said, I'm the man, I went in before God and began to cry out again to God for mercy.

Now Asa didn't cry out for mercy. It says in verse 10, Asa was angry with the sea or Asa was angry with the voice of God sent to turn him from the pathway of weakness that he had created. I can hear Asa speaking to this prophet saying, don't you know who you're speaking to? I am the king of me, myself and our cities.

Are you ignorant of the victories that I have won? Are you ignorant of the strategies that we've employed and the things that apparently has given us? And Asa was angry and put him in prison and he was enraged at him because it's like the type of a person sitting in this church and you're hearing what I'm trying to say and you get so mad at me, you're going to put all my DVDs on the shelf somewhere behind a book and I'm not listening to him anymore. He will not congratulate me in my victory. He will not congratulate me with what I have done.

Now the acts of Asa first and last are indeed written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. In the 39th year of his reign, verse 12, Asa became diseased in his feet and his malady was severe. Yet in his disease, he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians.

In other words, he was brought to a place where he couldn't go forward. Yet he was still too stubborn to humble himself before God. I feel that the Lord in his mercy will always try to get a hold of us.

If he can't speak to us, he'll try to get a hold of us in other ways. I know this from personal experience. I have over the course of my life tried to do things in my own strength only to have my own strength taken away, only to find myself going down the street shouting out, what? And the Lord saying, now we can talk.

You're going your own way. You're doing this in your own reasoning. You're following your own course.

And when you do that, you're going to bring not only weakness into your own life, you're going to bring it into the lives of the people that you are leading. And God's trying to get a hold of this man. And there are some people here today.

You can't go forward just like Asa. You're stuck as Pastor Teresa is going to teach on at three o'clock. You're stuck in a place and you can't get out of where you are.

And so what do you do? You've walked as a Christian and somehow you embrace this idea that I've been a Christian so long I shouldn't be stuck. And so what did Asa do? He just could not humble himself. He could not admit that in all of his former victories, in all of his present pomp and circumstance that he needed God just the way he did when he began.

There's something in all of us that when we're successful to a measure, we start actually fighting against the Holy Spirit instead of moving with God the way we did in the early years. We start wanting to take over. We start wanting to chart our own course and to guide our own path.

And we lose out with God and we don't even know we are. But God in his mercy, God in his mercy. If you're here today and you just, oh, Pastor, you've been in my apartment.

You've hidden in the closet. You've been listening to my prayers. You've been listening to my murmurings.

If you're not even praying, you've been listening to your murmurings. You've been listening to my complaint. I am stuck.

I can't go forward. And I should know better. I've been a Christian for so long.

And why am I in this place? And why are these old sins trying to visit my life again? Why am I fighting the way I'm fighting? I remember the days of old. I remember when I first came, I knew this marvelous victory. And now the only song I can sing is in church on Sunday morning.

My worship through the week is gone. I just groan on the subway. I don't praise God on the subway.

I groan. I've groaned all the way to work. I've groaned looking for work.

And I groan all the way home. And I've lost. I'm stuck.

I can't move. I can't go forward. And that's exactly what happened to this king in the 39th year of his reign.

Now, we know, we know that all things that God allows have a divine purpose. We know that this man didn't have to be diseased in his feet. But God allowed it to him to tell him, Asa, you're on a pathway that is a pathway of weakness.

You're going to bring weakness not into your own life only, but those who follow you. But he would not seek the Lord. How tragic.

That's a constant prayer of my life now. I pray it every day. God, help me to finish well.

Don't let me grow cold in following it. Don't let me read your word out of rote. Let this book live in my heart.

Don't let me get bored with your presence. Deliver me, God, from that which seems to afflict so many when they get older. And so verse 14 is the fitting end to this king.

It says, They buried him in his own tomb, which he made for himself in the city of David. And they laid him in the bed, which was filled with spices and various ingredients prepared in a mixture of ointments. And they made a very great burning for him.

So there he is, Asa. Dead, but smelling so sweet. That's where he ended.

You know, a lot of people in church end up like that. Spiritually dead, but smells so sweet. Instead of rags, we now have suits, nice clothes.

Instead of looking like a mess, we're at least a little better than we used to look. We've got our language is all right. We know how to say praise the Lord when we come to church.

And we slow everything down and we become nice on Sunday morning. Most become nice, except those who lose their seats. They have a tendency to... Please bear with me, if you will, on that.

And we look so pretty. We go to a lot of churches across the nation, even some in this one. Look, everybody looks so pretty, but they're so dead.

Just laying in a tomb they built for themselves, surrounded with sweetness. Everybody's sweet, but dead. And that's where Asa was at the end of his life.

And it's a picture that should scare us. He made the tomb for himself, the scripture says. He made his own grave.

And people who will not cry out to God make their own grave. Churches that have no... There's a lot of sweet-smelling churches in America that can't even... We've got a young team of people out on the streets, ministering to street gangs, and they've got 256 conversions in one week. But we have a lot of churches filled with people with knowledge, a lot more knowledge, a lot more experience.

And they look so sweet and they smell so good. But there's no life that can't even affect their city block. God forbid.

You see, the point I'm trying to make is right in the beginning. David said, I will praise you with my whole heart. Before the gods I will sing praises to you.

In verse 3 he says, In the day when I cried out, you answered me and made me bold with strength in my soul. And that's the whole message God's put on my heart. In the day when I cried out, you answered me.

And that's what made David a man after God's heart because he didn't cry out just one time. He cried out all of his days. All of his life.

He was not too proud to recognize that without God he had nothing. And with God he had everything. There is a huge difference.

That's why I said all the kings of the earth will praise you, oh God, when they hear the words of your mouth. They will sing of your praise, oh Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. Though the Lord is on high, yet he regards the lowly.

But the proud he knows from afar. David said, Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me. You will stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies and your right hand will save me.

In the day when I cried, oh, I pray with all my heart that in this church we never become too proud to cry out to the Lord. We never get to be a people who just love to look sweet and smell sweet but we're willing to sit in our own grave. There was a man called Lazarus back in scriptural history who died.

And he was surrounded because that's how they buried people. He was surrounded by sweet-smelling spices. But the Bible says that his stance rose above the sweetness.

That's when you know you can live again, when you can't cover yourself in sweetness anymore, when that man or woman stands there and says, I stink. I stink in my suit. I stink in my pretty dress.

I'm tired of it. And I'm tired of surrounding myself with an appearance of life. I'm tired of the struggle.

I'm tired of the battle. I'm tired. I'm tired.

And I'm tired of living like this. I don't want to live like this anymore. If I'm going to live for God, I'm going to live for God.

And suddenly he hears a voice crying out to him, Lazarus, come to me. And you see, if you have a humble heart, you will always hear that voice. You'll hear it in your victory times.

You'll hear it in your defeated times. You'll hear it when you're strong. You'll hear it when you're confused.

You'll hear that voice of Christ calling your name, saying, just come to me. Just move towards me. Not to the physicians, not to the treasury, not to human effort.

Just get up and move towards me, Lazarus. And I have to believe in my heart that there had to be something in that man. I don't know the fullness of where he was, but I do know he could hear the voice of God calling him.

I don't know when scripture doesn't record what is the first thing that came out of his mouth. It's only conjecture on my part. But I feel in my heart that laying there, surrounded with all these sweet spices, yet his own stench was rising above it.

Nobody else but him knew it. Don't forget there was a stone rolled over that door, so nobody else would know but him. He's all covered up, all wrapped up, all made to smell sweet, and everybody outside has an opinion.

But the only one who really knows what it really smells like is him. The only one who could really get fed up with that condition of death is Lazarus himself. And I happen to believe, it's just a conjecture, it's not written in scripture, but I feel the first thing out of his mouth was, Jesus! You've come! You've come to me! It's not too late! It's not over! I'm not finished! I'm not dead! I'm going to live! I'm going to sit at the table with you! I'm going to be a testimony of who you are! People are going to come to you because of me! Because I was dead, and now I'm alive again! David said, Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me.

You will stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand will save me. The Lord will perfect that which concerns me. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever.

Do not forsake the works of your hands. You will revive me. You see, the kingdom of God is for the humble.

Though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar. Don't forget, his eyes are scanning. Who is fed up living in death? Who is tired of trying to escape bondage in their own strength? Who has had enough of just being spiritually dead when we know that that's not what we're supposed to be? Who is fed up with human effort, trying to produce what only God can produce? Who is tired of the facade, of smelling sweet on Sunday morning and stinking the rest of the week? You see, revival won't come without a cry.

We are asking the Lord to send an awakening to our cities, to our country. Perhaps a last-day move of the Spirit of God. But there will never be an awakening without humility.

There will never be an answer that touches our generation without a cry. There will never be a living testimony of God without a people who recognize, I need a living testimony of God. My testimony has got to be about him, not about me.

That's what the Lord is waiting for now. We can't come to him presenting ourselves as any kind of a reason why he should bless the nation. We come to him with truth.

We come to him in honesty. We come to him saying, this is what I am. And I'm not willing to play the game anymore.

I want to be a Christian who has the resurrection life of God at the center core of my being. I want it to be his victory on my lips, not my own. His righteousness, not mine.

I want a testimony of him, of Jesus Christ, that can stir the hearts of my generation again. There has to be a cry. I want to give an altar call this morning for people who are just... Whatever it is your trouble is, David said, though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me.

You will stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand will save me. I want to give an altar call for people who are just willing to say, I can't do this anymore. And I'm not willing to play the game.

I'm not willing to pretend there's victory. I have been offered life, resurrection life, abundant life, and eternal life. That is my inheritance.

And I am completely unwilling to settle for less. It could be a struggle in your marriage. It could be a struggle that you have ethically in the workplace.

It could be an addiction that's in your life that you've hidden. It could be secret alcoholism in your life. It could be drug addiction.

It could be pornography. You're just simply saying, I'm not willing to play the game anymore. I'm not willing to make my own grave and lie in it, in the house of God.

Jesus, I'll call to you. If you're calling to me, I'll call back to you. And I'm going to trust you for victory, and freedom, and life.

I tell you, if we inherited the full victory that's ours in this sanctuary today, there'd be dancing in the streets. I'm not, I'm not, I'm not overstating anything. You'd walk out of this house.

If you fully comprehended the depth of the victory that is yours, you'd be dancing in the streets. People would be coming to Christ by the dozens. There'd be a song, a testimony, a life, a joy, a vision in your eye that can only come from God.

But first it means that we come out of our graves. First it means we leave behind that which is dead, and we move towards that which is life, and we have the humility to admit it. It doesn't matter how long we've walked with God.

Even just lethargy, spiritual lethargy is just as much of a grave as anything else. Just bored with the things of God. You don't want to go to hell, but you don't have enough courage to really live for heaven.

It's a bad place to be. But today you hear something. You just hear... If I have been faithful to what God's put on my heart, you have heard Jesus calling your name.

You've heard Him. His eyes have scanned this room, and He's seen you, and scanned you on the internet, and He's seen you, and wants to give you life. Wants to win victories that could only be attributed to Him.

Wants to give you peace. Asa had peace until he started walking in the flesh. Then he had wars the rest of his life.

There's peace to those who walk in the Spirit. We're going to stand in a moment, and if you would just like to come to this altar and call out to Christ, to Jesus Christ, Jesus, help me. I'm going to invite you to do so in the annex, North Jersey, here in the main sanctuary.

Let's stand together, and we're going to worship for a few minutes. And as we do, just come. Just unashamedly come, wherever you are.

Just come as you are. You'll never have it all together. Just slip out.

Just do it now. Don't wait. Don't try to reason yourself out of a victory.

Just slip out. You're having a hard time to be a father, a husband. You're having a hard time to be a wife, a mother.

You're having a hard time to speak truth. You're a coward when it comes to Christian things. Whatever it is, whatever your trouble is, just come.

Just come. We're living in the last moments of time, folks. Just come.

Just slip out of wherever you are. Don't play any games with God. You don't have to play games with God.

Just slip out, and we're going to pray, and we're going to believe God for an incredible victory here this morning. In Jesus' name. You know, when you read that scripture that says, The eyes of the Lord scan to and fro throughout the earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal towards him.

It doesn't mean that you're walking perfectly the way you should. It means that you have not forgotten the source of your strength. That's who he wants to show himself strong towards.

That I recognize that my redemption, my life, the breaking of the chains of my past, my present, and my future, and my hope for tomorrow is all in you, Jesus. I'm not going to be disloyal to that. You died

because I needed a savior.

You lived because I needed a redeemer. I'm not going to be disloyal and move away and start trying to resolve this in my own strength. And David said, In the day of my trouble, I cried, and he heard me and delivered me.

And so I can't pray this prayer for you. I can't lead you in this prayer. It has to come from you.

Everyone who's responded, whether you're physically here or you responded in your heart today, you know exactly what it is you need to pray. So I'm going to ask you, Ivory. We're going to sing that song softly.

And as we do, you are my hope. You are my strength. You are everything to me.

I want you to lift your voice in a cry. Now, a cry doesn't mean you have to shout. A cry is something that comes from inside.

It's like, Oh, God. Oh, God, help me. That's a cry.

God, deliver me. God, strengthen me. I can't get out of this in myself.

I can't do this without you. A cry can be a whisper. It's got nothing to do with how we do it.

It can be as loud as that. It can be as soft as this gentleman here. But I want you to lift your voice now, just for the next few moments.

Just lift your voice to God. Everyone here, just lift your voice to God, whatever it is that you need. You recognize it all comes from him.

Just lift your voice to the Lord now. Just lift your voice to God. Don't be ashamed.

There's no shame in this. God gives grace to the humble. There's no shame in lifting your voice and declaring your need.

Don't worry about it. Let's lift your voice to God now. God, we ask you to draw us again, all of us, Lord.

You told the church of Ephesus that they had done many things right, but they had lost their first love. I pray, God, that you put that burning passion for you in each of our hearts again. The willingness to let you speak, the willingness to move in the direction you call us.

Give us the grace, Lord, to put away our own definition of what life should be and to follow you. Father, I thank you, Lord. God, help your people across this nation now, across this city.

Lord, help all of us, God, to come back to you again. Help us, Lord, to pray the way we need to, to live the way only we can with your spirit. God, we thank you with all of our heart today.

I thank you for my brothers and sisters that have come forward today. Lord, you will not. You said if a son asks a father for bread, will he give him a stone? How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? Thank you, Lord, that your eyes have seen many in this sanctuary today, looking for help and hope and strength for the future.

Lord, you have not disappointed us. You cannot be anything other than who you are. You are faithful.

Bless you this day, God. Guide us who guard us now. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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