

Living With Open Hands and An Open Heart (Video)

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living with open hands and an open heart, focusing on the need for divine strength to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who spitefully use us. It challenges believers to ask, seek, and knock for the Holy Spirit's empowerment to live out Christ-like love and forgiveness, especially in a society where the gospel is out of season.

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Luke 6:27, Luke 11:5

Topics: "Divine Empowerment", "Christ-like Love and Forgiveness"

Description

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Transcript

I want to talk to you today about living with open hands and an open heart. Living with open hands and an open heart. Matthew chapter 7, if you'll turn there with me and that's where we'll start today.

Father, thank you, God Almighty. There are places in your word that we can't go unless you take us there. It simply is not possible.

We don't have in ourselves the resource to do the things you're asking us to do. And so, Lord, we yield to you. And you told us that if we would ask, you would give us the strength of your Holy Spirit.

You would give us the power to be a people, Lord, that you are asking us to be in this time in which we now live. And so, Lord, help us, God, to go into the pages of your word. Lord, help us, Lord, to let the pages of your word find a resting place inside of our lives and our hearts.

God, help us not to push away the truths we're about to hear this day. Lord, for it is the key to being a witness for you in these last days. God, I thank you with all of my heart that you will speak to us in a special way today.

In Jesus' name. Living with open hands and an open heart. How many think that you're already doing that? Can I see your hands? They're slow, real slow going up, because some of you are saying, I sense a trap.

I feel a trap. Well, it very well might be, actually. Matthew chapter 7, beginning at verse 7. Ask, and it will be given to you.

Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives.

How many receive who ask? Everyone. And he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks, it will be opened.

Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, that's in contrast to God, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? Therefore, verse 12, that means in summation, or leading to this conclusion, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them. For this is the law and the prophets. Now, you and I must recognize that we need a strength beyond our own natural strength to become the people that God is asking us to be, especially in this present and the soon-to-come time.

The Apostle Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 2 and 3, part of verse 2, he said, Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Be ready to preach the word of God when it's a favorable time in society, when people are interested in the word of God, when it's fashionable maybe to be called a Christian.

I remember that when I first came here 25 years ago to New York City, everybody was a born-again Christian. Anybody remember that? Athletes were born again. Politicians were born again.

Everybody, and it was a fashionable thing to be a born-again believer in Christ. So, the word of God was in season. Now, we're living in a time, in verse 3, he says, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

In other words, a time will come, has come in previous societies, and we are entering into that time in our world today where people are no longer interested in truth. They're not interested in the word of God. They're not interested in the truth of God.

They do not want any restrictions on their behavior. They want no borders, no boundaries. They want to call everything evil good and everything good evil.

And it becomes very difficult for somebody like you and I. I'm not in the place that many of you are, and you're in a work environment where it's very difficult to have even a biblical worldview now. The people around you will not endure. I mean, one of the most loaded questions in the lunchroom right now or in the school system, whatever it is, is what's your viewpoint on traditional marriage? And you find yourself in a place where, if you just even share your opinion, it's no longer, people are no longer willing to endure a biblical opinion on any topic, especially when it concerns morality or behaviors.

Now, if the time comes where people around will no longer listen, and it's probably very close to here or already here in some cases, the question you ask is then how do I share Christ with them? How do I preach? You know, Paul said, preach the word, be ready in season and out of season. In other words,

there's a way to preach truth when it's a favorable moment in time, and there's a way to preach when it's not favorable. And so you would ask me, well, so how do I do that? How do I do that when it's going to cost me just to even have a biblical worldview? And my answer to you is by living with open hands and an open heart.

Therefore, therefore, verse 12, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets. How you would like them to treat you, if they were in your position and you were in theirs, do that to them. If you were the one presenting contrary arguments to truth, if you were the one pushing the boundaries of behavior to the point where your behaviors are putting you in jeopardy of your own eternity with God, if you were in that position, how would you want a genuine believer to respond to you or to treat you? You see, this is the context of asking.

That's why it says, ask, and it will be given you. Seek, you will find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.

You know, we look at those verses of Scripture, and we're all thinking about ourselves, aren't we? We're all thinking about, well, about me. Ask for more resources. Ask for a better job.

Ask for peace in my mind. And there's a measure of that, of course, I agree, that's necessary in every life. But the actual context of this is summed up in verse 12.

Ask for what you need, the giftings of God, the heart of God, the hands of God, put it that way, to be able to do to others, to treat others in the way you'd want them to treat you if you were in their position. And of course, you and I both know this requires a strength beyond our own. I can't do it, neither can you.

Let's be honest about it. We can't do it. We can't do it.

Just think of that neighbor across the hall in your apartment building and put it in the context of this Scripture. You're there praying, God, get them out of here. My life would be so much better if you'd just get them out of here with their music and all the stuff that goes on.

How wonderful my life would be if these people did not live across the hall or in the workplace. If that person was not at that desk beside, get her, get him out of here. My life would be so much simpler if that person wasn't here.

You see, it requires a strength to be given for people when the gospel is out of season. And it requires a strength that we don't have. It has to be Christ in us, the hope of glory.

I don't know about you, but when I first came to Christ, loving my enemies was not high on my priority list. I thought if I just let them continue walking down the street without bleeding all the way down the street, then somehow I was winning a victory. Yet God was wanting to take it a whole lot farther than that, take me into the pages of Scripture.

And it all begins with a new way of praying, a different kind of prayer. You know, when we're in our youthful stages of living as a Christian, we're like children. And you know, those of you who have raised children, you understand this.

It's all me, mine, give me, it's mine, it's mine, it's mine, it's mine, it's mine, it's not yours, it's mine. And there's a measure of that when we are young in the Lord where it's just about my health and my future, my mind, my freedom, and I get that. But there is a point where Christ is calling us into something a little

deeper than being focused on ourselves.

Now, James, the Apostle James, he says in chapter 4, verses 2 and 3, he says, no, actually 3 and 4, he says, you ask and do not receive because you ask amiss that you may spend it on your pleasures. In other words, there's a point where God's gonna start saying no. When we go to prayer, but it's just all about ourselves.

It's all about my life, my future, my provision, my happiness. In other words, I want the resource of God and I want it to spend it on myself. And I want to feel good.

Even coming to church on Sunday morning, don't ask anything of me, just tell me how wonderful I am. Don't ask me to give anything, tell me today what I can get. And that's what James is talking about.

It's a kind of a life that's seeking God, but it's not in the truest sense for the ultimate objective of what our life is supposed to be. We're asking, even today we're asking, God, give me this, do this for me. I'm asking you for this, but it's really just for my pleasure.

It's so that I can feel better and know and feel secure about my own future. And James goes on and says something phenomenally powerful, even offensive if we didn't understand the heart of God. He says, adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? In other words, this is the way the world lives.

The world lives, it's all about me. I don't care about you, it's about me. If I can use you for my benefit, I will use you for my benefit.

But don't ask me to be given for you. And he calls it adultery in a sense because we are betrothed as the bride of Christ to the bridegroom, and it betrays his heart. His heart was not to come and take from us, but to give.

God so loved the world, what? That he gave his only begotten Son. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. And he told his own disciples, he said, as the Father has sent me, now I'm sending you.

As the representatives of that heart, as the bride, in a sense, of the bridegroom. As ambassadors of another kingdom called heaven. Now that's why he says if your whole prayer life, and I'm talking about prayer again today, if your whole prayer life is just about my future, my safety, my security, my provision, my freedom, all of these things, if that's where your prayer life ends, then you end up with a heart that's not in line with the one who called you and saved you and betrothed you.

Now, Luke chapter 11, let me show you where this kind of prayer begins. Luke chapter 11, beginning at verse five. He said to them, that's Jesus, which of you shall have a friend and go to him at midnight and say, friend, lend me three loaves.

For a friend of mine has come to be on his journey and I have nothing to set before him. And he will answer from within and say, do not trouble me. The door is now shut and my children are with me in bed.

I cannot rise to give to you. I say to you, though he will not rise to give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence, he will rise and give him as many as he needs. So I say to you, ask and it will be given you.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened. Remember, it's the same thing, same scripture we open with.

Everyone who asks and receives, he who seeks finds that the Hebrew knocks, it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? So here's the context of asking. The context of asking, it begins when we choose to do something for someone else when it is no longer personally convenient for us.

That's where it all starts. It's midnight. That's not convenient.

Where a friend comes to your house at midnight. I don't know about you, but I'd be inclined to say, call me in the morning. We'll go for breakfast.

We'll go down to Cracker Barrel, and I'll buy you breakfast. But you see, the context is it's midnight. It's a dark time.

It's a difficult time. It's a hard time. And this particular man has a friend that comes to him, and he himself has nothing to eat.

He himself is probably hungry. He has no bread in his house. And it's midnight, and a friend has come to him, and he recognizes that it's not about his own need.

He knocks at the door of the man with the supply, not for his sake, but for the sake of the man that came to him at midnight. We have so many people living in the midnight hour now who are hungry. They are starving for direction.

They are starving for life, hope, and a future. And the fact that it's not being satisfied is driving them to anger. It's driving them to division.

It's driving them to look to blame somebody. But you and I have in our Christ the resource that God's willing to give us to feed the need of this hour. Praise be to God.

But it means that we have to go to the throne of grace, and it's not about us anymore. It's about them. This is my prayer.

I'm on the radio now every week. I'm across the country on up to 600-plus stations, and I pray every week, God, help me. God, help me for their sakes.

I'm not looking to sound good on the radio. I'm looking to have something from heaven that causes people in their cars to begin to pray. It causes people in their offices to begin to pray.

It causes people at home to begin to pray. I'm asking you, Lord, for bread. I'm asking you, God, for those three loaves, the compassion of the father who sends his son, the power of the Holy Spirit to give life, and the courage of the son to go to the cross if necessary, as it was, of course, that those who believe might have eternal life.

God, help me. God, help me, not for my sake, but for their sakes. This is the kind of prayer.

This is where it all begins. This is how we start to be a people who are living with open hands and an open heart, and it goes even deeper than that. In Luke chapter 6, if you go there with me, I wanted to show you.

Now, this is the place none of us can go, none of us. We can start to pray. We can say, God, give me some bread.

Give me some truth for others. Give me provision, Lord, so that I may pass it on to others, but there are certain places that without the Holy Spirit, without what God promises to give us, we're never going to go there. Remember, he said, Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

In other words, everything that I've taught you to this point, he's saying to his disciples, is summed up in this one statement. Now, I say to you, verse 27, Luke chapter 6, I say to you, love your enemies. It's not easy, is it? I don't know about you, but I can't do it.

I can't do it apart from the Holy Spirit. I can't do it apart from the resource that God, God has to love them through me. I can't do it.

The Holy Spirit has to love them through me. It's not possible. The best I can do in myself is maybe just turn my back and walk away and just don't do harm or don't respond in like kind, but that's not what he's calling.

He's calling me to something deeper. Remember, Christ came and died for us when we were not even seeking him. He gave his life when we were still enemies of righteousness.

He's actually asking us to do what he did, but we recognize that only he can do it through us. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Do good in the office. Go out and get a coffee for the person that's talking about you behind your back all the time, lying about you. Do good to those across the hall.

Take them a cake or do something. Just do good. Speak good words when they curse you.

Bless those who curse you. Bless in New York City. Bless those who curse you.

You know, it's not hard to get cursed on the streets here. You can't walk from here to Penn Station without somebody cursing you on the street. And Jesus said, and that's his red letter, bless them, bless them.

Can I pray for you or bless you? And really mean it, really mean it. Not just like, not just one of those syrupy, you know, bless you, I hope you get run over by a bus as you go by kind of thing. And pray for those who spitefully use you.

Pray for them. When you go home at night, those that are backstabbing you in the workplace, those that are doing things to you that are not right, the scripture says pray for them. So here's two verses of scripture, and I know I can't go there without the Holy Spirit.

I can't. And to him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. Think about Christ.

Think about the Son of God letting people slap his face. Now he's not asking us to do something he didn't do. You understand? The King of glory, the God of all power.

He could have killed a whole bunch of them right on the spot. He didn't even have to speak, he just had to think it. And he's asking us to do what he did, but you and I know that without the power of the Holy Spirit, we can't do that.

I can't do that, you can't do that. And him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. In other words, don't run after him down the street yelling, police, police, help.

Give to everyone who asks of you. And to him who takes away your goods, do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, remember that scripture, remember at the end of ask, seek, knock, and just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners and receive as much back.

But love your enemies, do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return. And your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also was merciful. Verse 37, judge not, and you will not be judged.

Condemn not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be put into your bosom.

For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. So let me just encapsulate what we've just read. He says, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you.

Somebody strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other one. Give to him if asks of you. Do to others as you have them do unto you.

Love your enemies, do good, lend, hoping for nothing in return. In other words, you can lend kindness, you can lend good words, you can just lend. Be a giver and not a taker.

Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Don't judge, don't condemn, but forgive, and you will be forgiven. Then he says, give, and it will be given you.

Give these things. Give this kindness of God. Let the kindness of God be expressed through your life, and it will be given to you.

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be put into your bosom. In other words, God says, if you're willing to give these things out to others, I will give them to you in measure, in such a measure you can't even contain it. I will pour back into you.

If you're willing, if you squeak out mercy, I'll squeak mercy back into you. If you generously give it, you will generously receive. That's what he's saying.

Give, and it will be given to you. Praise be to God. Pressed down, shaken together, running over, put into your bosom, into your heart.

That's your bosom. It'll be put into your heart. The more you choose to give and let God be God, God says, I will pour into you.

I will pour through you. I will take you into places you can't even hope to go in your own strength. I will make you a vessel through whom I, God says I, through whom I can preach the gospel in this last hour of time.

You don't even need to use words. It will be me preaching through you. It will be me reaching out through you.

It'll be me forgiving through you. The beauty of this whole thing is that God's not asking us to do anything on our own. He says, if you ask of me, I'll pour into you, and I will pour out through you the same grace that sent me to a cross for you.

I will do it through your life. And so now we go back to where we opened. Ask, and it will be given you.

Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. Everyone who asks, everyone, you and me, receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

Folks, we have to ask now. We've got to prepare for the day we're now in and moving into, a day of hostility towards the things of God, a day when God's people are going to be called revilers and bigots and haters and dividers, a day when you will be vilified, a day when it's going to be very difficult, and we are going to need this incredible grace of God pouring through our lives, and it will be a testimony of Christ. Remember, it can't get any worse than when Jesus walked here 2,000 years ago when it seemed the whole of society is crying out, crucify him.

Take him away. We will not have this man to reign over us. That's the thanks he got for healing the sick, delivering the oppressed, even raising the dead, for doing nothing but kindness to people everywhere he went.

That's the thanks this society gave him, but yet when he went to a cross, some of the most powerful words recorded in Scripture is when he said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they do. We have an availability through the Holy Spirit to operate in the same spirit in our day, and I remind you that going to the cross changed the course of history.

We don't remember a lot of names back then, but we do remember the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. A lot of people in this generation may not remember your name, but they will remember your kindness. They will remember your forgiveness.

They will remember your good deeds. They will remember that you were the one who blessed them when they were cursing you, and who knows what the God will turn in some of these people's lives and leave a blessing behind them and lead them to the saving knowledge of who he is and what he has done for them. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given you.

Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened. Everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

What man is there among you? If his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? And of course, the other passage dealing with this same discourse says how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? My cry is the same as yours. Lord Jesus Christ, through us, extend your hands and extend your heart to your enemies and to ours, as you once did for me when I was your enemy. Praise be to God.

I'm so thankful that people who were Christians in the early days before I came to Christ didn't treat me the way I treated them. I'm so thankful they cared when I mocked. They stayed forgiving and consistent.

Went out of fear. I remember in the lunchroom there was a Christian police officer, and I felt ashamed of myself in the early stages when they would mock him for reading his Bible at lunchtime. And out of fear, I would join them.

And I'm so thankful that even though my words probably stung every time he spoke to me, it was with the law of kindness in his heart, the law of entreating. Didn't treat me as I treated him. Never once said, you falsely accused me.

Why don't you stand up and defend me? I'm so thankful because it brought conviction into my heart. I'm so thankful that the man who finally came to my house, another police officer, and started talking to my wife and I about Christ never quit when I wasn't necessarily kind and when my responses were altogether other than what perhaps he had hoped that they would be. But he, both of these men, were an example of the scripture that's written here.

They found something of God that enabled them to be kind when I wasn't. And ultimately, it led me to Christ. Ultimately, it caused me to read the word of God.

I know that everybody here is probably thinking of somebody right now, somebody in your family, especially with Thanksgiving. You know, nothing tests your spirit more than family gatherings. When you get together and you're hoping in your heart it's going to be a nice time for once to find yourself mocked because you're a believer in Christ, laughed at, ridiculed, vilified even.

And it's getting worse as time progresses because of the political and moral divisions in our nation. It's now much worse than it used to be. Find yourself yelled at.

The only way to preach the gospel in those environments is the way we just read it, to love, to reach out, turn the cheek, forgive. If somebody takes you away, let them have what... If they're taking away your sense of dignity at the moment, let them have it. You see, in that way, we are letting Christ preach through us.

And it very well might be, folks, listen to me, it very well might be the last time for many. I believe in my heart we're entering into the last season of this world as it has been known. I don't know how long the season will be, but this moment of lawlessness warned about in the scripture is now on us.

You know that. If you're even connected to society at all, you know that, that there's a sudden unleashing of lawlessness, unheard of, perhaps, in this society anyway since its inception. And it's getting worse by the day now.

And it seems to be going around the world. I believe that Christ is coming soon. And so we have to... Yes, I do.

So you and I have to go into the pages of scripture and say, Holy Spirit, you've got to take me now where I can't go. You've got to give me now what I don't have. You've got to make me into what you have destined me to be because I can't do it in myself.

And you watch, if you pray that, according to what I read in the Bible, and Jesus Christ cannot lie. He says, you ask and it'll be given. You seek, you will find.

You knock and it will be opened. And he says, you do what I'm asking you to do and I'll do for you what you're asking me to do. I'll pour into you in such incredible measure that it will be a delight.

Yes, it can actually be a delight to go through a darkened time in society. I believe that with all my heart. And so, Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart today.

I thank you, Lord, that you are leading us now as a church age into some of the harder things of scripture, places that we just skim over or maybe don't even stop to ponder what is it that you're asking of us? But, God, it's so clear. And now that we're living in a day where the gospel is out of season, this is the only way it can be preached now because people are no longer willing to endure truth. So would you help us to be those incredible ambassadors of the cross of Christ? Would you plant your heart deep within us, Lord? Would you pour into us in the measure we're willing to give out? You said that you would pour back into us until it overflows, pressed down, shaking together, and running over.

That's your promise to us. So we hold to it, Lord, God. And we thank you, Lord, that we can take you at your word.

You're not a deceiver. You don't say one thing and do another, and you don't have this little caveat to the bottom of the page with all these qualifiers. This is what you said.

And so, Father, I ask, Lord, from my heart and for this church, give us the grace to walk this pathway that you clearly lay out before us. Help us, Lord, God, for we can't do this in our own strength. And we thank you for it in Jesus' name.

I'm going to worship. I'm going to worship just for a moment. And we're going to stand here in the annex and also in our satellite churches.

And I want to... and campus churches, rather. And here's what I'm asking. Some people right now are facing a situation.

You say, God, I can't do this without you. I can't be kind. It might even be just coming Thanksgiving.

You say, God, I dread. I dread being around the table with my family. And I can't be kind, and I can't not argue, or I can't be in a place where I don't defend myself.

But, Lord, you can help me. You said if I ask, if I seek, if I knock, I will be given the ability to do to them as I would like them to do to me if the roles were reversed. And so, God, I'm asking you for grace.

I'm asking you for strength. And that's my altar call today for those among us, all of us, to say, God, we're not going to run from this truth anymore. We're going to run to it.

And we're going to take you at your word and trust you for strength. College kids that are here today, you know how you feel in your college campuses if you have a biblical worldview, how you're mocked and portrayed to be an idiot because you hold to God's view of society and of this world. And you need the strength of God not to respond with a like spirit.

And I want to just encourage you with all my heart. This is a divine moment for all of us to ask, just simply ask, and seek and knock. That's what he said to do.

Or like the man, go to the door, it's midnight, and just bang on that door until you get the bread to give to somebody who's hungry. Let's stand together, and if that's you, just come and join me here at this altar, will you? And we're going to pray together. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, God. Thank you, God. You know, the key to the victory in this is a transference, in a sense, of living for ourselves and starting to live for the sake of others.

And it is a transference, and it's something that only God can do. God has to put that in the heart. Because left to ourselves, we will just live for ourselves, live to preserve ourselves.

It will be all about my life and my happiness and my freedom instead of somebody else's. And it requires a certain death to ourselves that only God can do. We can't do it.

None of us can. But he can. That's the good news.

He can, and he will, because he promised us if we would ask, we would receive. If we would seek, we would find. And if we would knock, it would be open to us.

He will give us the bread. He will give us the grace that we need to be the people that we're called to be by the grace of God. And so, Father, today, Lord, would you help us as your people to have a transference of affection from ourselves into others? Help us, Lord, to care about even our enemies.

Help us to care for those who really don't fight against us. They fight against you, Lord. Love them through us, Holy Spirit.

Forgive them through us. Do good to them through us. Pray for them through us, Lord.

You yourself said you would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask, and so, Lord, we ask, God. I don't know what else to say. But, God, we need your Holy Spirit.

We recognize that we need your Holy Spirit because we can't do this without your power. Doing it through us. So we yield, Lord.

We have the desire to do these things. We see it in your word. And, Lord, we recognize our inability, but we also recognize your ability, your great ability.

Who for the joy that was set before him went to the cross. And so, Lord, we thank you, God. Give us a vision of the joy of seeing even our enemies come to you, Lord.

Of their lips praising you instead of cursing us. God Almighty, let it be, Lord, that you give us a new heart, and a new mind, and a new spirit, which is the promise of scripture. We knock as a church.

Times Square Church today, we seek, we ask, we knock. We ask you, God Almighty, for everything that you promised us. And today, help us to start giving out.

Just help us to start giving out. And you promised in the measure we do, you will pour back into us, even greater measure. But help us to give out.

Help us to give kind words when unkind words are spoken over us. Help us to be, Lord, just help us to forgive when others want to hold grievances. Lord, help us, God, to be your hands and your heart.

Speak through us, live through us, Lord Jesus Christ. Give us the grace. And, God, we will bring back the fruit of it to you.

Our lips will glorify you. We will give you thanks when we recognize a power emanating from us that we recognize as you alone. It's not us, Lord.

It's you, loving and forgiving through us. So help us to live with open hands and an open heart. God, I praise you.

I pray for great strength for men and women at this altar today who have to face hard situations. Great strength. Supernatural strength.

God-breathed strength. And help them to walk out of whatever room it is that they have to go into saying, only God could have done this. Who else but God could have done this? Who else but God could have let my heart be such at peace? Who else could have caused me not to speak because it wasn't the time? Only God could have done this.

So, Father, help us, Lord. Help us. We recognize our poverty, but we recognize the incredible generosity of your hand.

And, Father, we thank you for it with all of our heart today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/WJSK5FnE-4l.mp4>

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