

Missions Conference 2012

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon emphasizes the importance of honoring God, community unity, and the church's mission during the Missions Conference 2012.

Duration: 1:14:45

Scripture: Matthew 20:25, Matthew 23:11

Topics: "Missions"

Description

The video shown during the sermon was about a SYP (presumably a youth group) and their experience with the presence of the Lord. The speaker mentioned that they started with nine disgruntled kids, but through prayer and seeking the Lord, their hearts were stirred. They invited Pastor Carter to speak to the young people, and as he was about to start, the presence of the Lord came into the room and baptized the kids in the Holy Spirit. This encounter transformed the youth, and they ended up ministering five times at a retreat and continued to be impacted when they returned to their youth group.

Transcript

Well, welcome to the Missions Conference and 25th anniversary of Times Square Church. I'm excited to be here and it sounds like you are too. But you know what, before you guys sit down, I would just like to just launch this weekend just with honoring the Lord, just with a little word of prayer to welcome Him because it's because of Him that all of us are here.

You know, Jesus is the one that we are here for, He's the one that's brought us here, and He's the one that deserves just the honor of being the first one for this conference. And so, God, we just humble ourselves before You this evening, and we realize, God, that without You we are nothing. And God, it's because of You that we're here.

Lord, we can look at a history of a church, and Lord, all it is is a history. God, but You are the one that has the thread of life starting a long time ago. And Jesus, it's Your blood that's cleansed the people in this church.

God, You have cleansed the generations before us. And God, You are after the people that are coming after us, God. And so we are just going to rejoice with You tonight.

We pray, God, for this weekend. Lord, we want You to come. We want You to feel honored and respected here in this house.

God, our heart is with You. And Lord, we don't want anything to distract from Your glory because, God, it's Your glory and it's Your presence that has been in this pulpit. It's not a man, it's not a person, God, it's You.

And Lord, we honor You for that, and we thank You, God, for that. And so as we head into this weekend, God, I pray that You would help us, Lord, to keep that perspective that, Jesus, You are our first sight. You are the one that we're looking to tonight.

And Lord, we just pray that as we head into this evening, God, that You would be glorified and honored through everything that we say and what we do in Jesus' name. Thank You, Lord. Amen.

So please be seated. And of course, I ran out here so fast I forgot my notes, which is probably a good thing, you know, because God knows what we're doing and it is going to be a blessing throughout the entire weekend. There's a lot planned, and I know that He's been here already this weekend.

For me, just to watch the body of Christ come together to even make a weekend like this happen, I was saying to somebody as I walked over, if you look at the things that are going on around, you look at the platform and all these pictures and the stuff in the lobby or the annex with the street fair tomorrow and all that, it really does take a village to make something happen around here. It is no small thing, and no one person can take any credit for what's happened here. And so all of us, you know, it is a lot of people behind the scenes making it happen, but we do have a nice full schedule for you.

But one thing I did want to point out to you, for those of you that are new to Times Square Church in the last few years, I do want you to understand that everything has a purpose. You know, that big quilt that you see hanging back there isn't just by chance. You know, several years ago, we did a missions conference, and what we had decided to do was have the people of the church just bring a piece of fabric that represented their country.

And as they brought their fabric in, there was a group of women that sat and stitched the whole thing together and made a quilt of Times Square Church. And what I was thinking about as I watched it there with the people, it just blends right in, right into the sanctuary and to all of us because we are a church of many nations. We are many colors.

We are many things, you know, that God uses for so many different reasons. And just like that quilt, that represents you and this church. And, you know, as you look at the pictures, these are not just pictures that we brought or that we bought online.

These are all pictures that represent projects that we work with, trips that we've been on over the years, people that are even here that are represented, that they work with. You look out in the lobby, you'll see things hanging around above. Those are just moments in the history of this church that, you know, in a way had a defining purpose.

And so we just felt that it was good to look back at some of those things. And then if you go into the annex, you know, on Sunday or even later today, you'll see a timeline that runs from 52nd Street all the way to 51st Street. And what that is is just, again, little moments, you know, in a timeline of a church.

And God has been faithful here. And we are just grateful and we're blessed. You know, and so as we look at these things, it's like I think the way we want to start is recognizing that, yes, it is a history, but more important than anything else, God is eternal and that his story keeps going, you know.

So we have the service tonight, the street fair tomorrow with the Michigan Film Festival that will be right here in the sanctuary in the afternoon. And then on Sunday we have all three services that are also very specific in what we're doing. You know, at the 10 o'clock service on Sunday, it's really more of the foundations of Times Square Church and what has always been here and what will always be here, you know, shared from this pulpit and what we honor in this house.

And then the 3 o'clock service will be very specifically about the missions of Times Square Church and where it started and where it's come to and where it's headed. And then at the 6 o'clock service we'll be doing just testimonies from lives that have been changed or God has used, and he used them through Times Square Church and how they've been ministering outwards. And then where we're headed right now as a church, you know, from the feeding programs that we started a long time ago and some of the things that we're doing today.

And it's very exciting when you see how God is moving because he doesn't look backwards and wish for the old. He's always moving forward, and that's the exciting thing about today. So tonight what we're going to do is we want to talk about Times Square Church today.

You know, and so there is some, you know, the church is full, and most of you that are involved in ministry are around a lot. But you realize that there's a lot that happens through this church. And when you look at the street fair tomorrow, you'll see all the outreach ministries and the opportunities to serve.

You'll be able to share with people out on the street that are involved in those ministries and get a bit of a taste of that. But tonight, you know, all of our pastors are not just people that come and just share their word from the pulpit. We love that, and we are fed by that, but all of them... Thank you.

I agree with that person. I like that. But with each person that's here, every pastor that's represented, they actually represent another area of ministry that they oversee.

You know, so you've got Pastor Patrick that oversees the youth ministries, SYP ministries. You've got Pastor Will who oversees the education and the mentoring and discipleship ministries of the church, and Pastor Ben who oversees the seniors ministry but is also very integral to making a big church small. And then we have Pastor Teresa who is the head of the Summit International School of Ministry, and then Pastor Carter who is our senior pastor.

But also what you don't realize is that he's very, very involved in what all of us are doing. You know, so for me, he's someone that I go to with questions about how missions is moving and what we're doing. So every department leader has access to him, and we work off of what God is giving to him.

But what we're doing as a church that he's going to share about tonight is we have a broader audience besides just Times Square Church. You know, you are the ones that fill the house, but we also have satellite campuses and an online audience that he's going to share a little bit about. So it's going to be a great evening.

We've got a couple videos that we're going to share as well. So as the night progresses, I'm only going to introduce them once. So as each pastor shares, like Pastor Patrick is going to come and share the

announcements, but right after he sits down, we're going to see a video of a SYP, and then he's going to share, and then Pastor Will, Pastor Ben, and then a video of Summit and Pastor Teresa.

So it's going to be an evening that just kind of unfolds as we go, and I'm kind of hoping that that's what the whole weekend is about, the unfolding plan of God. So let's just enjoy this evening, and Pastor Patrick, if you don't mind. I just wanted to start out by letting you know, basically, that we started out with nine disgruntled kids, and the Lord began to stir our hearts to pray and seek the Lord about what he was wanting to do.

And I remember I invited Pastor Carter to come down and to share with the young people, and we were down in the lower lobby. The kids and I, teenagers and I, and Pastor Carter came down, and we had a little music stand set up so he could get up to speak, and he put his Bible on the stand. And the moment he was about to open his mouth, there was a young man on the front row who had a sweatshirt with a hood on it, a hoodie, and he threw the sweatshirt over his head, and he pulled a drawstring so that the sweatshirt got about this tight.

And I remember Pastor Carter looking at him like, oh, my gosh, basically with his body language saying, move me. I really want to hear what you have to say. And then I invited Pastor David to come down and share, and he, too, when he left, he said, my God, we have to pray for you.

What a tough crowd, you know. And so the Lord burdened our pastors to pray, and I'll never forget the year they did. Called the church to prayer, and at the beginning of the year, we went into three days of prayer and fasting.

And to make a long story short, we began to fast and pray for a breakthrough among the young people. And then about a month later, we had a little band that we had put together out of our kids, one of our youth leaders, and four of the kids, two girls and two brothers that played the bass guitar and the drums. And one night we were on our way to minister at a function where they were invited to minister.

It was a retreat for kids who have decided to stand up for Christ in their schools. And as we were on our way to that particular function, I'll never forget the evening. It was about a month later after the time of prayer and fasting as a church calling on God for God to bring a breakthrough.

I was driving this van, 15-passenger van. The kids were in the back. Young man, the drummer was right next to me.

There was a CD playing, and I said, you know, the kids in the back started to pray along with the leader that was back there, our guitar leader, worship leader. And I had heard these kids pray before, but the type of cry I heard coming from them that night was not like anything I had ever heard coming from these kids. And so I told them, quick, turn down that CD, that cassette.

I need to hear what's going on back there. And the moment he turned down the music, the presence of the Lord came into the van and baptized those kids in the Holy Spirit. And from that moment on, they were never the same.

They were never the same. We got to the retreat. They were supposed to minister two times.

They ended up ministering five times, and God began to touch these kids. And by the time we went back to our youth group, we went back to our youth group that Friday night. It was during the week this retreat

was taking place.

During the time the winter recess, we went back to our youth group, got back to our group. Our group was dead. And so I dismissed the kids at the end, said we need to gather together and pray those who would like to pray.

And we gathered together and began to pray. And little by little, God just began to touch the kids in the circle who had stayed behind along with these band members who had experienced a touch of God. And, folks, from that moment on, the tide changed in the young people's ministry.

The tide changed. The Lord had come and visited his people, and the ministry, the tide turned in a way where I would say where it was cool to be carnal, now it was cool to be on fire for God. Hallelujah.

And only God could do that, folks. Only God could do that. And I remember Pastor Carter used to tell me, before long, not before long, you're going to have a youth church on your hand, and that's exactly what happened.

We went from nine kids to now every Friday night at the gate, 700 kids come out to worship the Lord, to give God praise, and to experience the presence of God, and we're so grateful for that. That's called the gate. That's every Friday night right here in the sanctuary.

The ministries that the Lord has raised up within the young people's ministry are the junior high, the high school ministry, the young adult ministry, and they all have their own retreats and missions trips throughout the year, and they also do outreaches. And on Sundays, they each have small groups, connect groups. We also have a prayer meeting for the young people's ministry.

We have the young people's choir, the YPC. We have a youth band, the ushers' ministry, hospitality, drama ministry, information table, social media ministry, which is Facebook, Twitter. We also have foundations and new believers' ministry, and we thank God for that.

And we have kids going down in the waters of baptism, as you saw on the video, and all kinds of outreaches in the schools, the youth prisons here in the city, street outreaches, including Finley Avenue Street Festival, as well as the subways, our young people hitting the subways the first Friday of the month after the gate meeting. And lastly, I just want to tell you, it's amazing how the Lord began to move from the very beginning, and for me, it was such a joy recently, and I'll close out with this testimony, such a joy recently to go to one of our retreats with our teens. And I started out with the high schoolers, with the teens, and now I've got, as you can see, the junior high and the young adults as well.

And recently we went on a retreat, and we began to worship together, and the presence of the Lord came down in such a powerful way, and kids were invited to the front to respond to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit came down again. The same way He came down in the beginning of the ministry, He continues to come down, and kids were baptized with the Holy Spirit, left that place fired up. We went Friday night, kids were filled with the Holy Ghost Saturday.

Some kids didn't get filled. The bus came back, arrived at the front of the church. Kids got filled in the front of the church on the bus.

Folks, the kids were so fired up, some of them went to Central Park and hung out. They got filled with the Holy Ghost in Central Park. Folks, it's amazing what God is doing, what God is doing in this hour.

The ministry began supernaturally, and it continues to progress supernaturally. The Bible says, God is good, and His mercies endure forever. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Praise God. Hallelujah. What a wonderful privilege it is for me to serve under Pastor Carter, among other leaders, including Lisa Cammey and Elder Jerry Hampton, and so many others who are ministering on a level of discipleship, particularly people who are leading in the women's ministry and in the men's ministry, and so many others who have classes where people can come and learn those things that God would have them to understand so that they can have more of a relationship with the Lord, more of a capacity to worship Him, to witness for Him, and to wage war against the lie of the enemy.

When I first began to come to Times Square Church, I had been living in the streets of this city for about a year. About 88, 89, someone invited me to come into the church, and it took about a year or two for me to settle in. But when I did, I became a part of a ministry that was known as the Timothy House Discipleship Center, and it was my first taste of discipleship.

Up until that point, I thought that I could love the Lord on my own. I thought that I could worship Him on my own. I had experienced things in church and in life that brought up walls and caused me to think that I couldn't trust anybody but so far.

When I became involved in the discipleship ministry, I had to learn to trust people. I had to learn to befriend people. I had to learn to be vulnerable to people and to allow people to be vulnerable to me.

It took a few years for me to finally recognize what God was doing in my life and what He was doing at that early stage was reminding me that community, that discipleship is imperative to Christian development and Christian growth. Since those days, I've been involved in discipleship ministry on one level or another and have loved it ever since. I've seen a few examples in my life of church growth and church development, and I found that there are two basic models of church growth.

One is the Great Commission model where we go out and we win the lost and we train them to worship the Lord and to bless His name. The other is the old lady who lived in a shoe model, and that model is very simple. It's after that same nursery rhyme where it talks about the old lady who lived in a shoe who had so many children she didn't know what to do.

I've seen churches grow exponentially, but because there was no foundation and there was no discipleship ministry, no program for people to learn and grow, it became chaotic. And so people are numerically, the church is growing, but the people are not growing personally. And so all of a sudden nobody knows what to do with all the people that are there.

Now you remember the rest of the nursery rhyme. It talks about this old lady who lived in a shoe, had so many children she didn't know what to do. Then it says she gave them some broth without any bread.

She whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed. It's kind of like this, she kind of gives them this watered down thing, you know what I mean? This watered down broth, but no bread, no substance. And so you have that going on.

Churches are growing, a lot of people are coming. When they get there, there's nothing to eat. There's no nourishment.

So they give them some watered down message, no bread, no substance. And then they whip them all soundly and send them to bed. Now what I would suggest is instead they usually do one or the other.

They either whip them all soundly, that is they berate them from the pulpit over and over again. You shouldn't be doing this, you shouldn't be doing that, you shouldn't be doing that, now go home. Or they lull them to sleep, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Tell them that everything is alright, when nothing is alright. What we try to do here is develop the church around sound theology. Whether it's the pulpit ministry or some of the ministries that I mentioned.

We've seen over the years men and women grow, develop, go out into ministry. We've had services or classes that are specific for young ministers who have a call. And over and over again we've just seen men and women grow more and more like Jesus.

More and more in love with Jesus. And I count myself privileged above measure to serve under Pastor Carter and to serve you. To do everything that I can to see to it that as people come into the house, there's bread.

There's a place to learn, a place to grow. Amen. Praise God.

Praise the Lord. So, thank you so much for hearing me out. I love you in Jesus' name.

Good to see you tonight. Everybody looking good? Everybody looking good? God bless you. We'll see you.

Let's just thank God for Times Square Church tonight. Thank you Jesus. Thank you Jesus.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank God.

I am so privileged to be a part of this church. And I started coming here in 89. In 89, when this Brother Dave came to this building, I began coming.

And Brother Dave asked me to come every week. And I said, Brother, I can't do that. I'm in charge of this Bible school and I just can't do that.

Well, he used to come every month. So, he wanted me to come with him all together, but I couldn't. But I've been coming.

For about a year, in the 40s and 90s, I didn't come. But other than that, I've been here. And a few years ago, I was praying and God said, I'm going to change your ministry.

I was traveling quite a bit. And then I got a call from Pastor Carter to come on the staff. There's one of the ministers here, one of the pastors.

And to be in charge of the seniors ministry and to minister here in the church. And what a joy it's been. Pastor Carter, thank you.

And when he called me, I already knew. Because God had said, I'm going to change it. Something's going to happen now.

I'm going to change your direction. And I am so privileged to be a part of this work. Outside, there's a sign that says, the church that love is building.

This love is the secret. That's what God is all about, is His love. He wants the love of Jesus to be shown in this city.

And that's what this church is all about. God's love. God's showing His love.

To a hundred nationalities. And our prayer is, my prayer is, that God will help us to answer the prayer of Jesus. I want to read it to you.

In John's Gospel, the 17th chapter. The dying prayer of Jesus. I do not pray for these alone.

But also for those who will believe in me through their word. That's us. That's us.

That's you folks that are right here tonight. Those that believe, I'm praying for them. His prayer.

And here's His prayer. That they may be one. As you Father are in me and I in you.

That they may be one in us. That the world may believe that you sent me. And we're thankful for the seniors ministry of praying and seeking God.

And we're asking God to help the seniors to lead the way in prayer. For this city. For unity.

To come among God's people and to bring us together. And then we're working in this church is bringing another program. Make a large church small.

It's the TSC Connect. We are looking to see this prayer of Jesus. His dying prayer.

Fulfilled in bringing us together. And bringing us. That we care.

This church cares. Love. The love of Jesus is the secret.

And God we pray that this love will be so powerful. And it is powerful in this church. But to see it ever increase.

As the days get darker. That the power of us staying together. And caring for one another.

And getting involved and connecting. Connect. Connect to the body.

Connect with the youth. Connect with the seniors. And become a part.

And we're praying for that. We're working at it. And we're hoping by the end of this year.

That we'll be able to connect with you in a new way. That if you're attending this church. This is your church.

That we're going to be able to contact you. When you need us. When you're not here.

That we're going to be able to connect. It's a big problem. But it's not big for God.

Because it's his prayer. And we believe that love is the thing that has built this church. Love is the thing that's going to carry it on.

It's the love of Jesus. And may that love ever increase. May it be in every department.

And may it be in the seniors. And let us lead the way, seniors. Let's lead the way.

Let's set the pace. And be out. And be a part of it.

And set the example. And we're going to believe, God, that this church will be a light. That when you're here, you're connected.

That you get a part of it. And if you're not here, we want to connect with you. Pray for you.

And join together. And let the world see that Jesus Christ is the same. And that he's here.

And it is alive. And it is coming soon. And we're believing, God, to send the revival to this city.

That this church won't hold a people. We thank you. God bless you.

And bless this staff. Amen. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Jesus. Welcome, welcome. Welcome all our friends.

All the missionaries. All of you who have been here long before I was ever here. And sometimes I feel like a visitor here.

It was almost two years ago today that I took over the presidency of what was formerly Mount Zion International School of Ministry. And 2012, January 1, we changed our name to Summit International School of Ministry. It was started about 18 years ago by Brother David Wilkerson, Pastor Dave.

And he bought the land there. And they grew a school, put the buildings up, and welcomed students from all over the world. Currently we have about 19 international students.

And we have 70 to 80 students from right across the U.S. But I am so happy to say this year, Pastor Patrick, we are the beneficiary of some of those youth on fire. And what a blessing they are to the school. They're going to be coming on the first Sunday of November.

And there are so many that are homegrown in Times Square Church. They're going to be singing and ministering. So I'm looking forward to that.

We also, because of your trip to the Netherlands, we now have three young men from the Netherlands that are at the school with us. So praise God. Just for those that don't really know too much about the school, we are a two-year program.

And then it's one year of internship. And those internships are offered across the United States. And many of the people that are our host facility, our site places where our interns go, are here with us this weekend.

And so what a joy to be able to say thank you and to be able to meet other ministries that may be interested in having interns from Summit. Every year we have a theme at the school. And the first two years, the theme was Year of Freedom.

And it was the Holy Spirit speaking prophetically of what he wanted to do, of bring spiritual freedom to the students, to teach us how to be very useful and to make us an army. But this year, coming into our third

year, it was made real to us that this was to be called the Year of Hope. And the Year of Hope.

And we have seen so much of what the Lord has, the changes he's brought even this year. We've started a sports program. We have a new computer center with 35 Mac computers.

And that is largely to the generosity of people in this congregation that have blessed us with that. Thank you, Times Square Church. Upgraded library.

There is much changing on the outside. We have way cool T-shirts now. So even if we go to play other teams and we don't do so good in our startup year, we're going to look great.

So that's always important. But I just... See, I know. But I just want to very briefly share tonight in terms of the Year of Hope.

I'd like to share with you why Times Square Church gives us hope at Summit. Why do you give us hope at Summit? First of all, this church gives us hope at Summit because the Lord has chosen to abide in this place week after week, service after service. And I know that people come here and they don't take that for granted.

And that people are thankful for this church. I am so thankful for this church. I remember as a young Christian... Yes, amen.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. I remember as a young Christian listening to a tape of Pastor Dave's, and I remember I had my hands in the sink doing dishes.

And I put this crap, Oh, Lord, if I could have any holiday, I would love to go to New York City and Times Square Church. And, yeah, I did get that. That was more than answered.

Who would have known? But this is a place where the Lord abides week after week. And that is such hope to Bible students, to know that there is a strong church. There are many strong churches, but this is a strong church where they see that the Lord comes.

The Lord does what only he can do and bring transformation in a congregation of people that want him. This becomes a place of hope because this is a place of prayer. And you can feel that this is a house of prayer.

Jesus said, My house shall be called a house of prayer. And there's something of the delight of God when people pray, when they look away from themselves and their circumstance and say there is a God in heaven, he hears, he loves me, and he answers prayer. And it changes the atmosphere here.

And when we come as a school to visit here, we feel that freedom in the air because there are many people here who are saying, I'm getting into this army. I'm not going to be a spectator in a faith walk. I'm going to be a participant in a faith walk.

I'm going to be a person of prayer. You bring us hope because this is a place of worship. And when this curtain rises and this worship starts and this choir behind us and this orchestra and this band, you know, you can feel sometimes the worship is like warfare and it's like the point of the arrow and it's breaking through all the heaviness of the week, all the bondage of the city.

It's going into battle for us. Hallelujah. This place gives us hope as a younger generation because of the worship here because when you lift your hands and the Lord chooses to come down and you can lose yourself in worship, people don't yak endlessly into a microphone.

They don't try to whip us up. They believe God to come. And God comes week after week.

And we are set free by this worship. And we enter in behind them. And they faithfully lead us week after week.

I thank God this place is a place of hope because it's a place of worship. Hallelujah. It's a place of internship.

And I want to thank every department leader in this church who mentors the interns from Summit. We have interns here before us in the first few rows. We have our alumni president, Michael Fratt, sitting in the front row.

But I thank you for being a place of mentoring. Thank you for asking the question, why do we have interns anyway? What are we doing? I thank God for Tim Buxton and his wife, Sarah. I thank God for Brother Tregg and all those, and the Hughes's and people that just want to pour into our young people and mentor them.

That when they come here, they're just not cheap labor or somebody to do something that, you know, that helps you in the photocopying. But they treasure these young people and they mentor them. And the young people that come here and work here, they pray when the internships are given out, so many of them, oh God, please send me to New York City and Times Square Church, hallelujah, thank you.

You give us hope because this is a place of testimony. This is a place of testimony. And there is, beloved, the testimony, myself included, the testimony of so many in this church is who against hope believed in hope.

Who against hope, when there shouldn't be any hope, have decided to call on that name Jesus. And hope was created to come and hear from him, to come and go out and live it. When there should be no hope, they were stirred by the Holy Spirit to hope.

And there is a bondage-breaking anointing in this place because of the testimony that Jesus Christ has risen up for his name and his namesake of the people when there should be no hope have been stirred to hope for the glory of God. You bring us hope, hallelujah. Every Sunday night there is a witness, there is a testimony of what only God can do in the life of people who have been given a new heart, a new mind, a new life, new hope, hallelujah.

You have blessed us because this is a place where the torch has been successfully passed, where it has gone down from our founding pastor, Pastor David Wilkerson, and the torch was passed to my husband, Pastor Carter Conlin. And it is a place where the torch has passed successfully. And I tell you, young people need to see that happen.

That there is not this wrestling for power, there is not the casting off of the old guard and elbowing out, but there is honor, and a torch is passed. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Hallelujah. And I might add, the torch is not just passed, the torch is passed lit. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. And that's what we are believing God to do, that this testimony of this church gets passed where the torch is passed down lit. And finally, this is a place of praying servant leadership.

And we feel the impact when we come here. There is a covering here. There is godly elders who pray.

These men pray. These men have put a canopy of prayer over this place. There is unity in this place.

There is leadership, spiritual leadership, servant leadership in this place, because it is a praying leadership. And you and I are the beneficiaries of that. And I know, gentlemen, for a fact, at Summit, we are the beneficiaries of your prayers.

And I thank you for that, and I honor you for that. Hallelujah. To all the department leaders, you show us laid down lives.

It is the effect of a praying and a servant leadership. I thank God for Times Square Church. Summit thanks you.

You bring us hope. Glory to Jesus. Glory to Jesus.

Thank you for letting Jesus be Lord of your life. Amen. Praise God.

I'm overwhelmed. I don't know what else to say. I was thinking tonight, years ago, I came here about 18 years ago, and I remember the Holy Spirit speaking to my heart and telling me, the first time I sat on the platform, actually, he told me, don't turn to the left or to the right all of your life, from everything that I'm going to teach you here.

And I remember Pastor David Wilkerson pouring of his heart and his life into me for so many years, and I'm still stunned by the day that he leaned over to me in the middle of the service, which is typical Pastor Dave. There was not a lot of advance warning when things would change. We'd never, ever had a discussion about this.

I was simply here to serve him and serve this church, and one day he leaned over to me in the middle of worship and said, you're ready now. And he didn't say anything else. He just said, you're ready now.

So the obvious question was, I leaned over and said, I'm ready for what? And he said, you're ready to take over this church. He said, I will be starting with an exodus from the church. An exodus from the church, it will last over several years, but I'll be handing you the baton, and at some point I'll be leaving.

And he told me, he said, and the Lord will most likely take me home. And I was just overwhelmed with the humility, the God-given ability that Pastor David had to let God use his hand to found something as wonderful as this church, and then at the appropriate moment to let it go. I'm deeply, deeply grateful for men of God like David Wilkerson that set a pattern for things that I've been able to learn, and we've been able to hopefully pass many of them on to you and to one another.

And it's my privilege tonight to honor the founding pastor of Times Square Church, David Wilkerson. Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus.

Brother David, you can hear us tonight. Well done. We'll pass the torch on lit as well, by the grace of God.

And look around tonight and see all the missionaries that are here from all over the world, and so many have gone out, and they've obeyed the call of God. But before I mention all the names, there's a second person I'd like to honor tonight, because there was more than one. There was a senior founding pastor, but there were other founding pastors in this church as well.

And one of them is here with us this evening. We'll be hearing from him later on throughout the weekend. And he was with this church for, I guess, about eight years.

One of the founders, Donald Wilkerson. Please, if you'd be kind enough to stand up. Brother Wilkerson is the head of Teen Challenge Brooklyn, and I'm pleased to announce tonight that we're opening a new satellite campus in Teen Challenge Brooklyn.

We'll be announcing that very, very shortly. So I'm blessed to be able to say that. You're going to be hearing this weekend from so many different speakers.

David and Karen Davis, saved actors on Broadway. Karen is here this evening, saved. The first, David Davis was in this theater when the actor, or whatever it is called, awards were held here.

And I don't know what they're called. Tony Awards, the Tony Awards. I don't know where that other word came from.

It just sounded appropriate at the time. And when they came to the Lord, Pastor David Wilkerson put David Davis in charge of the sound. He'd never worked a soundboard in his whole life, but started there.

And you know, when you sit under the true gospel of Jesus Christ, that is not sent to pacify you, as we heard from Pastor Williams so masterfully tonight, you never know where you're going to end up. And David and Karen are on the top of Mount Carmel, right where Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal. They have built and are pastoring one of the most pivotal churches in the nation of Israel today.

And a tremendous privilege to have them here with us. Bettina is going to be with us. Bettina Mariag, who is the admissions director at World Challenge, and who was formerly the admissions director here at Times Square Church, will be with us shortly.

Dr. Mylon Villar, who is in Manila in the Philippines. Mylon, are you with us this evening? She's not here. She's here.

Oh, there you are. God bless you. Great to have you here.

Douglas Calvano and Harry Dietrich. God bless you gentlemen. From the City of Refuge in Columbia, then also from Central Asia, we have Mike and Cindy Edson, wonderful friends of this church.

The very first financial controller at Times Square Church, Roger Yonker, is here with us. He's going to be sharing, speaking as well. And last, but not least, we have Kate Hughes and her husband, Ben, who are going to be sharing.

They're in charge of Feed New York and Child Christ. It's going to be, did I miss anybody? I hope I didn't miss anybody there. Cesar, Pastor Cesar from Morocco.

God bless you. It's going to be awesome to hear from you. I don't want to steal his thunder, but Pastor Cesar was a translator, translating us Sunday into Spanish.

When the Holy Spirit came on him, as you heard tonight, Pastor Patrick tell us, and he began to out-preach me in the translation booth. I don't know if I recommend everybody do that, but it would tell me that, if I had the story correctly, maybe he could tell it later, but he would be moving so one with what the Holy Spirit was doing, and sometimes his thoughts would actually be ahead of what I was about to speak. Perhaps maybe I'm just that easy to anticipate where I'm going.

But God got a hold of him, and he went into one of the tough areas of the world, and you're going to hear about the miracles. It is miraculous what God is doing through this man of God. So I think we're going to be greatly encouraged.

And don't forget tomorrow, the Missions Fair out on 51st, and Pastor Rick Hagens has come up from Alabama with a team with 3,000 pounds of pulled pork. That is a lot of pork. Praise God.

I asked somebody the other night, what's the difference between pulled pork and pushed pork? I wasn't quite sure, but they told me you pull it off the bone, so that's why it's called pulled pork. The sandwiches will be out here. There will be 5,000 pulled pork sandwiches tomorrow, and there should be enough for at least one for everybody, I'm hoping.

Praise God. Now, God has given this church exposure. Now, Pastor David told me that he had ordained this church for two reasons.

Number one is to warn the city of an impending judgment that God was going to bring on the nation and the city. And secondarily, to gather a remnant people, to gather a bride from the city, a body of believers who love Jesus Christ. And thirdly, that God had established this church as a lighthouse.

Of course, a lighthouse doesn't really show until it gets dark, until the day is dark. A day when a lighthouse beam can actually, you know, we go on vacation to a place in Canada that's very close to a lighthouse, and in the daytime, you don't see the lighthouse beam, even though it is shining as brightly as at night. But at night, for miles, you can see it.

It scans the ocean. It scans the bays. It scans the shores and becomes a guidance, as it is, for those who are looking for refuge and safety in a time of darkness.

And, of course, in a time of darkness is a time that it's very dangerous for those that are traveling and trying to find a safe harbor. And over the years, we've not sought this, but the Lord is giving this church great favor. And it's suddenly, in the last year or so especially, there's a sudden favor of God.

As things are getting darker, the beam seems to be going out farther, going out through the Internet, for example. I had lunch just last week with a man who owns a television, owns the whole channel in Europe, and he told me, he said, The Lord has told me as long as I live, himself, he said that I'm to put your services on television across Europe and in Scandinavia, in the U.S., and Africa for free. Very shortly, he's going to be putting our service live, our Sunday morning service, which is streamed live, it's going to go live through Europe into Scandinavia, various countries, and there's a new device, I don't know what it is, but he said as you speak, it will ticker tape your words across the bottom of the screen into various languages of the different countries.

I can't help but think of how the Scripture says the gospel, now we're not the only ones doing this, we're going to do our part, obviously, but the gospel will be preached into all the world. All the nations will hear, and all the players are in place, and you and I are simply doing our part. We're a small part of a great, big,

wonderful picture that God himself is painting, and you and I, our heart's desire is to simply do our part and do it well, and make sure that at the end of this journey the Lord can say, Well done, good and faithful servant.

We have 2,000 unique visitors. Now a unique visitor on the Internet is somebody whose computer is identified, it's not spam, it's not some advertising coming through, it's a person that is identified as a unique, so when I use that word it means a person or a church in some cases, or groups of people coming in and streaming our service. We have 1,300 unique users every Sunday morning from 10 to 12, and those will be sites that are coming in and streaming with us live, so it's almost, actually, Philip Blatterach, our technical director, said there's actually more people streaming on Sunday morning than there are people actually live in the sanctuary, in the overflow.

We have about 25,000 or so sermon podcast downloads in the last 30 days, these are just the recent statistics, people coming onto our website and downloading a podcast. We have 109,843 visits to our website in September, so it's probably 1.2 or so million for the year. We have about 41,788 unique visitors per month.

The audio sermon downloads, 423,339 sermons were downloaded from our website in 2012. The sermon newsletter goes into about 40,000 homes, 27,463 received it last month by email, and 12,190 received it by regular mail. We have a website called Pastors Only, 3,587 pastors are registered and come in for encouragement, 55 new ones are joining it every month on average.

Now, I don't share those for any other reason. Praise God. Well, this is New York, isn't it? We are kind, though, to everyone, in spite of their condition and what they need.

Now, all of these things, as wonderful as they may seem to us, I want you to hear me on this tonight, hear me carefully. I've had such a trepidation in my heart this week. All of these things will amount to little lasting or changing influence in our society, unless you and I are standing on the cornerstone of something that Jesus spoke in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 20.

In verse 25, he said these words to his disciples. You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over the people, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.

But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And again in chapter 23 of Matthew, in verses 11 and 12, Jesus said, but he that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased. And he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

If God chooses to use us, in a greater measure than he has, let's say for the past 25 years. I thank God for the past, but folks we can't build a testimony on that. We can't build a tent on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration.

There are people in the valley that need us. And we've got to go and we've got to fight, and we've got to constantly look forward to the future. But we must become servants to each other, to the body of Christ and to all people.

This is the cornerstone that will ensure that this church survives another 25 years at least. And that we're able to pass that torch on to another generation. I thank God for what he has done with all my heart.

But one thing stands above everything, he has done it. We have been the recipients of incredible grace and I am eternally grateful. And as God chooses to bless us, he blesses us numerically.

He blesses us with an expanded reach and border. He blesses us with the resources to reach out to a hundred churches and underwrite feeding programs in New York City. He blesses us and puts us on the radio, calling the city to prayer.

He blesses us with his presence every time we meet in the sanctuary. He blesses us with the living word from heaven when we stand and open the word of God. He blesses us with changed hearts.

He blesses us with elders who pray. He blesses us with leaders who don't look upon what they do as a job, but they consider it a holy calling. He has blessed this church so far beyond anything that you and I could have ever done.

No amount of organization could do this. No amount of any skill we could possess could keep it all together. If God doesn't build the house, you and I labor in vain.

It will come to absolutely nothing. And there's a goal that you and I must have that's simple. And here it is.

Put others ahead of yourselves. That's what we must do. That's the kind of a church we must be.

Apostle Paul describes the religious climate of the last days as many people having a form without the power of God in it. It's a form of religion, and it looks like God, but there's so little of God in it, and there's no power of God in it. There's nothing in it that can transform a society.

There's nothing in it that can lift up people or make a difference in their generation. Just like the prophets who ran out of the cities as Elisha was following Elijah on his journey. And I always look at that story as the type of a disciple following Christ and saying, God, help me not to settle in for less than the fullness of what you have my life to be.

And God was leading him to a place of being a servant to the people. Out of that city would come people with revelation. They would have knowledge.

They were studying. They were in the scriptures and texts of their day, and they could even tell Elisha what his future was, but none of them were willing to partake of the journey. And the scripture tells us the cities that they abided in had a powerlessness about them.

There was a form of godliness, but there was no power in it. And I don't know about you, but I'm not interested in that kind of a life. If Christ is alive in me, I want him to be alive in me.

I want him to do the miraculous. I'm praying for this church, and I'm praying, God, bring in the physically sick and heal them in this sanctuary. Let it be noised abroad.

Lord, do something so beyond us, something so powerful, something so sovereign. God, send your spirit in New York City. Cause there to be a prayer revival that would make everything around, all the other news and all the other things that media wants to cover would pale in comparison to what God is doing.

Isaiah 58, the prophet described a type of people who seek God, but he doesn't answer their prayer. And they said, Lord, we're fasting, but it's as if you don't take any notice of us. You're not answering us.

Why is that? And when he answers, it says, because you fast for your voice to be heard on high. In other words, you love the sound of your own voice. And you and I must be careful that that never happened in this church.

That we start loving the sound of our own voices. That we start exalting ourselves above the knowledge of God. That we start pursuing God for self-promotion, for self-recognition, and for self-accomplishment.

God, help us not to fall into that trap. The cry of my heart is, Lord Jesus, make us servants till the day we die. Make us servants to one another.

Make us servants to the body of Christ. Make us servants to the unsaved. Make us servants to people like our sister who came in tonight, who's not quite sound mentally.

We don't know her story. We don't know where she's coming from. We don't know why that happened.

But God, help us not to judge quickly. Help us to be servants to those that you are bringing into your house. The true servant of God, the one who will see the power of God, is somebody who lives not to hear his own voice, but to hear the voices of others.

Singing and shouting and praising God. The voices of others who don't have a song right now. They don't know there is a God who loves them.

They don't know somebody wants to reach out a hand that's nail-scarred, and lift them out of their bondage and bring them into the presence of God, not just for time, but for eternity. The true servant of God does not live for his own voice or her own voice. Does not live for public recognition, or the best seats in the house of God, or to be called teacher-teacher among the people.

The true servant of God lives to hear others' voices, raised in praise and adoration to a holy God, who is the only one who deserves the praise in the kingdom of God. I'll be the first to admit tonight that I don't really know fully how to serve. I wish I could say I did, but I don't.

I don't think any of us do. I don't think we fully get the depth of what this really means. When he says, The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve.

The servant is not greater than his master. The cry of my heart is, Lord Jesus Christ, as we start reaching out in this city, as you've given us the resources to underwrite feeding programs in a hundred churches, you put our voices on the radio, you make this church known. God, let it not be so that we can be held up in some kind of self-esteem in this house.

Let it be so that we can serve. Give us a basin. Give us a towel.

God, bring us down, so that we might wash the feet of people throughout this city and see them encouraged in their journey with God. I want to live to see the Methodist churches alive, Salvation Army churches packed to capacity, the Catholic charismatic meetings with a fresh fire of God touching them all over again. I live to see the day where churches that were our museums today are filled to capacity to where the people are standing outside and we have to stand on the steps to tell them our testimony so that they can find out what God is doing on the inside.

I live for that day. I live for that moment. I live for the glory of Jesus to be so manifested in this city that you and I, all we can do is go out on Broadway and stand there and clap our hands and cry and sing and dance like Abraham and Sarah did when Isaac was born because only God could have done this.

Nobody else could have done it. Only the Spirit of God could have done this. We must be servants.

I'll say to the elders and pastors of this church, I honestly don't get the fullness of this, but I'll give it my best try. And where I fail, I'll turn to God and trust Him for this strength. I'll do what I can.

Sometimes I feel so deficient. I look at these missionaries that are given all over the world, and I feel so shallow. Oftentimes, they even be on the same platform.

But the Lord said to me, If you will be great, serve them. I don't know fully how to do that. I don't know if it's... I don't fully know, but I'm willing.

I'm willing. I'm like a guy who's just applied for the job. I feel like that in my heart.

I have little experience, but I'm willing. I'll do what I can. You know, as a pastor here, I wade through the magnitude of this church.

It's 8,000 to 10,000 people, and it's almost impossible to get to know everybody. It's almost impossible to serve everybody, but somehow, some way, God is going to have to teach me. And somehow, some way, God's going to have to teach you.

And somehow, some way, God's going to have to teach us. And if the life of Christ, as I see it, is going to flow out as a lighthouse from this church, God's going to have to teach us as a church to take the lowest seat in the house and to live to see others' voices raised and to be used of God, not for our own betterment, but for the betterment of others. This will ensure that the next 25 years, we will live.

This will ensure that at the end of my tenure, that I can take the torch that was handed to me lit, and by the grace of God, hand it to the next pastor in this church, and hand over a church that's just as alive or more than alive than the day that I received it. It's the cry of my heart that on my watch, that we don't go into spiritual declension, that we don't begin to rest on the past. It'd be like a football team, for example, who's getting slaughtered in every game they play, and when they go into the interview, they say, but were you there in 87? Or what about the game of 91? Wasn't that an incredible game? And yet, they just got slaughtered on the field.

It wouldn't take long for the fans to start leaving the stadium as they stand there and wonder, why is everybody leaving? They lost a heart. They lost a passion. They lost a vision.

They lost a mandate. They lost the understanding. They became proud in their victory.

And God, in His mercy, had to bring it down because He's the only one who gets the glory. Nobody else can get the glory in the kingdom of God. God is so sovereign.

When Pastor David first came to New York City in 1958, I was five years old, riding a tricycle down the sidewalk in a town called Rouen-Niranda, Quebec. And God looked down and said, now that would be a good pastor for Times Square Church one day. After Pastor David gets through his court battles and gets Faustine's challenge and does what he's going to do and comes back to New York City, that's how sovereign God is.

We're not here because we're special. We're here because God chose to put us here. That's the reason we're here.

I've had a trepidation in my heart about this conference because there's a grave danger if we start praising ourselves. There's a grave danger if we start living on the past. And that becomes our identity.

And we stop looking forward to the future. As I read it in the scriptures, the church of Jesus Christ is always a future looking church. Always working, always going into the vineyard, always expecting the miraculous, always praying, always believing God, always going from image to image and glory to glory, always growing, always singing, always moving, always believing for the miraculous until the day that the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ are raised and we who are alive and remain shall be gathered together with them in the clouds and we're forever with the Lord.

But until that day, we move forward in the kingdom of God. Everything that God has done in the past should simply serve as a foundation to help you and I to understand how faithful, how powerful, how glorious, and how good He is. And the fact that He's not going to fail us, He's not going to forsake us, the only thing that could separate us from the power of God is pride.

That's the only thing. We begin to be exalted and we forget that we were servants and are servants in the kingdom of God and to the body of Christ. And I'm praying in my own heart, God, do something so deep in me.

Thank you for setting me free from fear years ago. Thank you for filling me with the Holy Spirit. Thank you for sending me out to speak to people sometimes in the thousands and tens of thousands.

Thank you for all the victories and everything I've ever known and won in the books and the CDs and all that stuff. But greater than all of this is the cry of my heart, make me a servant. A servant.

And I do believe that if you and I can cry that cry from the depths of our heart that God will answer us and He will keep us and He will continue to walk with us and He will be glorified through us as His body on this earth. Better to have a basin and a towel than the finest robe that New York City can offer. Better to walk with the lowly than to share the spoil with the proud.

I'm so thankful for what God has done. Such a beautiful building. Such a rich history.

We don't owe a dime and we have the resources to give to other churches now. I'm just so thankful. But you want to know what my part and yours has been in all of this? It's like we met a very wealthy man on the street and he just handed us a huge amount of money and said give it to the man over there.

So it's just we pass it to this hand and we do this. That's our part. And the man who is passing it to the other person can't touch the glory because we've had nothing to do with this.

It's not our resources. It's not our building. It's not our money.

It all belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and all the glory must go to Him. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Thank God for what He has done and what He will do. But I want to go out as a servant. I want to finish as a servant.

I want to serve my wife. I want to serve my children. I want to serve in my home.

I want to serve my family. I want to serve the elders of this church and the pastors. I want to serve the choir.

And I honestly don't fully know what that means. But I do know that if I ask, I will receive. And if I seek, I will find.

And if I knock, it will be open to me. Because that has been the premise of my whole prayer life on my Christian walk. It's something I want because I see it and it's right.

We're going to serve the churches of New York City. We're not going to become everybody's leader and everybody's instructor. We're going to serve the churches.

And we're going to rejoice as they grow. We're going to rejoice as they have testimonies of great victory. We're going to rejoice as God begins to answer their prayer.

That will be the calling. That will be where we're going as a people. That will be what keeps us from going astray.

It will keep the fire alive in this church. And I thank God for it with all my heart. Hallelujah.

I'd like to finish tonight with an altar call, if I may. For those who'd like to serve. And you too would like to learn what this means.

It starts at home. And then you learn to serve in the workplace. And then in your community.

And your church. And then it becomes just part of your life. A friend of mine, one of our elders one time told me, he said something really profound.

And it stuck with me. I can't shake it. He said, you know you've become a servant when somebody treats you like one and you're okay with it.

Now I'm not quite there, but I'm getting there. If you'd like to go on the journey with me and with the pastors and elders of this church, then I want to open this altar to you and we're going to finish with a prayer tonight after we sing a song. If that's your journey, if that's what you'd like your life to be, then I'm going to ask you just as we stand to get out of your seat and please just meet me here and we'll pray together as a congregation.

God bless you. Father, when Elijah picked up that mantle of Elijah, he became a servant to his generation. And when your spirit came on the day of Pentecost, you had 120 people who headed out also to serve their generation and changed the culture and changed the whole known world.

God, help us to finish the way we started. Help the church of this last generation to be something that resembles the church of the first. Help us to look beyond ourselves and our own needs, our own issues of heart and give us the eyes to see other people and the willingness, Jesus, to serve others as you served us.

And Lord, even after your resurrection, you still served. You still made biscuits and fish. You still served.

Lord, you've given us a clear road sign to greatness in the kingdom of God. Help us, Lord, to agree with your word. Help us, God, not to put away these verses of scripture that really are a key to honoring you in

this generation and to seeing your power released.

Give us compassion for people, Lord, and move through us as a body and keep us, God. Keep us in the days ahead and teach us to serve and to live for the benefit of others. And Father, let it begin tonight.

We want to rejoice this weekend. We want to clap our hands and dance. We want to sing about your goodness, but we don't want to forget, Lord, what the calling is.

Be pleased to walk with us, Holy Spirit. Be pleased, be pleased to speak to our hearts and to guide us, Lord, through places and waters where we've never walked before. Be pleased to keep us, Lord.

Don't let us fail or fall of the grace that you've given us. God, help us to finish this race together. Help us, Lord, to walk across that finish line, not leaving anybody behind, not forgetting anybody on this journey, Lord.

Help us to bring our brothers and sisters from all churches in this city with us and to walk as servants to all, Lord. And Father, I thank you, God. Thank you for this church, for this night, for this moment.

May this mark the beginning of another 25 years of incredible victory. And Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart for these people, for this body, Lord, that you've called in this city. Keep us and bless us.

Oh, God, let there be thousands and thousands and thousands of cries of new birth in this house. Baptism after baptism after baptism, Lord. Class after class after class of people being taught and disciplined in Christ.

Young people being filled with the Holy Ghost everywhere they go. Seniors alive and praying with the fire of God. Young people heading off to Bible school to be trained to go out through the world as servants for Christ.

Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh, God.

Do what only you can do, Lord. We know we can't do this, but God, you can, Lord. You can and you will.

We say to you, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed are you, Holy Spirit of Almighty God. Come and enliven the Scriptures to us and guide us into the ways of Christ.

And Father, we thank you for this and we praise you. We thank you. We give you the glory in the mighty, unmatched and holy name above every name, the name of Jesus.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, mighty God. Thank you, mighty God.

Now do me a favor and would you give him a shout of praise for what he has done? Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God. Thank you, Jesus.

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

Thank you, God. Thank you, Lord. Lord God, let this shout increase throughout the city, O God.

Father, we thank you. We praise you. We bless you in Jesus' mighty name.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise God.

We're going to go rejoicing tonight. We have to rejoice. Greg, do you have a rejoicing song in your heart tonight? We're going to go rejoicing.

Thank God. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. One more time.

One more time, give him a shout of glory. Praise God.

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