

Not So Fast, Goliath. Not So Fast

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon challenges the church to confront societal godlessness by returning to prayer and reliance on God's power.

Duration: 47:42

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:47, Romans 1:19, Romans 1:21-22

Topics: "Goliath"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher highlights the lack of courage and self-preservation mindset prevalent in the church today. He emphasizes the erosion of godliness in America and the need for believers to stand up for their faith. The preacher addresses the issue of homosexuality, stating that it is not God's intended design and that pursuing that lifestyle will never bring true happiness. He also emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit and the need for believers to rely on God's strength and provision.

Transcript

1 Samuel chapter 17. Please, if you'll go there, your Bibles. 1 Samuel chapter 17.

My message title is, Not So Fast, Goliath, Not So Fast. Father, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. Oh God, I cherish you.

I cherish you, Holy Spirit. I cherish you, Lord Jesus Christ. God, give us the strength to face this day and to boldly speak the victory of Christ.

I wouldn't want to speak this without the power of the Holy Spirit. It would be pointless, be just another voice on a soapbox going nowhere. But God, when you initiate a word to be spoken, it becomes part of the fabric of those who want to hear it.

I'm asking you, Lord, for an anointing deeper and richer than anything I've ever known in my lifetime. I'm asking it, Lord, for only one reason, for the glory of your name and for the forgiveness of those who are lost in sin and for the strengthening of your church. Lord, I yield to this purpose and I ask you, Lord, to overshadow all of the weakness of this body and mind and speak through me.

Father, I thank you that you choose to take the weak to confound the strong and the foolish to bring to nothing the wisdom of man. And so I yield my body as one weak and foolish that you might be glorified. And I thank you for this, in Jesus' name.

First, Samuel chapter 17, beginning at verse 1. Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shokoh, which belongs to Judah. Verse 2, And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side.

And there was a valley between them. And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam. And his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron, and one bearing a shield went before him.

And he stood and cried to the armies of Israel, and said to them, Why are you come out to set your battle in array? Am I, I'm not I, a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.

And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

You and I are living at a time in society today that's very similar to that which those who once had been called to represent God in this world had to endure. The one thing we know about history is history repeats itself over and over again. They were the people of God.

They had a testimony. They had a history. The miraculous didn't belong to the Philistines.

The miraculous belonged to Israel. Miracles had been their testimony. Miracles of deliverance.

Miracles of power. Miracles to the Red Sea. They had the promises of God to be a blessing in the earth.

But here in verse 11, we find them threatened by a challenge that would make them servants to godlessness. And they seemingly had no spirit or will to fight back. They'd lost the power to fight.

It's as if they forgot why God had left them in the earth in the first place. They were to be a blessing. They were to show the power of God.

They were to be a visible display to the godless in a sense that humankind is not God. There is a God. And whosoever will may come to him, of course, under the New Testament and begin to know his power.

Back in chapter 14 verses 47 and 48, it tells us that they had had previous victories. But now they're strangely standing in a position of powerlessness. It says, Saul took the kingdom over Israel and fought against all his enemies on every side.

Moab, and the children of Ammon, and Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. And wherever he turned himself, he vexed them. And he gathered a host and smote the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those that spoiled him.

Isn't that amazing? All this record of victory, all this record of God's faithfulness, but now standing in a position trembling under just one voice. One voice says, I defy you. I challenge you to give me someone that will fight with me and overcome me.

And if you cannot find somebody in your ranks that can do that, then you will serve us. You will be subservient to us. We will have cast off your cords from us.

We will have banded together. We will have rid our society of your influence. And the rules that God gave you will be gone and no longer ours, will no longer be governed by any of these things.

And we will in ourselves have conquered the testimony of God in the earth and be free in our own thinking as it is to be our own gods. Amazing to see an army that was once born by the will of God, now standing in such a position of powerlessness. But there is a reason for it.

In 1st Chronicles 13 3, David, after he became king, following this particular moment in history, he said, let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we did not inquire at it in the days of Saul. You see, Saul had victories. Like the church of Jesus Christ in this country had victories for many, many years.

We could point back, and we could look at these incredible tent meetings that went across the country. The movements of God, even in New York City in 1857, where prayer meetings literally not only swept the city, but swept the country in a time of economic decline. Most people are not even aware that the stock market collapsed in 1857.

And it was really through prayer meetings that God spoke to the country again. The great, great, great revivals in the New England area. The preachers that God raised up.

The incredible testimony of Christ. The numbers of lives that were transformed by the power of God. The number of people who came out of prisons talking about a newfound freedom that had nothing to do with the fact that the state or the nation had let them go.

They'd found that freedom in Christ. But in the days of Saul, winning battles, history, it seemed like nobody could stand against them. They put away the prayer meeting, and that's what the ark was all about.

The ark was the presence of God. It represented the forgiveness of God, the mercy of God, the power of God, and the provision of God was all in the ark. And they put it away, and they began to walk in their own strength, and they began to walk by their own reasonings, and they began to live by their own strategies.

Only to find themselves, not too many years down the road, on a mountainside facing a giant, and a giant's voice that they had no power to stand against. We might rightfully say that God's order was breaking down, and another order was threatening to take its place. And folks, we're living at the very same moment in history now that they were living at.

God's order is breaking down rapidly, and another order is coming to take its place. And if you don't realize how ominous this is, you will shortly, of what's about to happen in this nation. If the church of Jesus Christ does not rise up again, get back to the ark of God.

Drop all of the foolishness that came into the house of God out of the minds of men. All of the schemes, and all of the stupidity masquerading as the presence of God, and get back into the prayer meeting again, and begin to call out to God. Begin to call out to his name, and yield ourselves individually to the purposes

of God.

Go to the book of Romans chapter 1, please, if you will, in the New Testament with me. And I want to show you in the book of Romans, just by reading it, how this happens. How does the testimony of God, how do God's people become powerless? How do we get to the point, again in history, where we seemingly are a non-player in the nation? We're a salt that's been cast out under the foot of men.

Think about it for a moment. A hundred and twenty people came out of the upper room, a season of prayer. They went in in their weakness.

They went in as failures. They went in without a strategy, without a plan. All of their boasting, even Peter said, all failed them.

They were all failures, and they all knew it. They went into that upper room. The Spirit of God came upon them, and they walked out of the upper room sovereignly empowered by God.

Sovereignly empowered to be what they could never be in their own strength. And a hundred and twenty people changed the whole known world. A hundred and twenty people went back into the prayer room, went back into the presence of God.

Acknowledged their failure. Acknowledged their inability to go forward. Acknowledged that the forces gathered outside had just crucified their Christ.

They were much more powerful than they were, but came out gripped by the Spirit of God. Came out with a vision of the future. Came out of weakness and walked into the strength and the provision of God.

And a bloodthirsty crowd suddenly are looking at this. A crowd that had no, was in no mood for Christ and his followers. They just crucified Christ and were in no mood for his followers.

Suddenly are looking at a people God gripped. Sovereignly empowered by the Holy Spirit. Brought into the supernatural.

Not walking in the natural, but in the supernatural of God. And they looked at this and they said, what must we do to be saved? How do we get this? And yet today we have churches on almost every corner in America and we're barely influencing our neighborhoods. Let alone our culture.

Do we have the courage today to say something might be wrong? We might have missed something along the way. Maybe we're not as smart as we thought we were. Maybe our strategies are not as profound as we led ourselves to believe.

Maybe we've been on a fruitless parade and it's time to stop this and get back to where the power of God really is. Now Paul explains how the people of God become powerless. Verse 18, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

It's not that they don't have it, but they don't value it. It's not that they don't know it, they won't follow it. It's not that they don't study it, they won't embrace it.

It's not that they don't know where it leads, they won't follow where it leads. Or do what it says. Or wholeheartedly embrace the ways of God through Jesus Christ.

Verse 19 says, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God showed it to them. It's not a secret where the source of his strength and power is. Verse 21, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, and neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. That which was supposed to be manifested, that which truly represented the glory of God, not wanting the image of God, not wanting this full image of God to be manifested, they changed the image of God into the image of man. In other words, they just fashioned a more palatable Jesus.

May I call it that? And ultimately, it always goes down from there. Ultimately, discernment is lost. There was a recent, I don't even know what to call it, but it happened in North America.

I don't even know the origin of it. Canada was part of it. Part of it was here in the United States several years back, where there was these manifestations of the Spirit, of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, exactly as the Scripture says.

Not wanting the image of God, not wanting to walk in the ways of God, reducing the image of Christ to the image of man, and then suddenly believing the Holy Spirit manifests as a chicken and a monkey. The abject stupidity of this just boggles my mind. Now look at what happens to a nation when the church has backslidden to this degree, when the church has lost its voice, when the church is virtually cast out as a non-player, as society marches farther and farther away from godliness.

It says, Wherefore, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. We see Proverbs tells us, when there is no vision, the people perish. And the original translation means, when there is no clear revelation of who God is, that revelation comes through His people.

The people of society cast off all moral restraint. Who trains the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this cause, God gave them up into vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned their lust one towards another.

Men with men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meat. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Now we're talking about people who had the knowledge of God here.

We're talking about what happens when people hold the truth, but don't hold it. Don't value it. Don't walk in it.

Don't want it. Don't want where it leads. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication.

That means a society that just spirals down into where sex outside of marriage is just commonplace and accepted. Wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to

parents, without understanding, covenant breakers. It means their word is worth nothing.

Without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Not only do they do these things, even while claiming to have some measure of the truth in their possession, but they enjoy watching television. They enjoy watching sitcoms.

They enjoy being entertained by fornicators and liars and murderers and thieves and all such like. And they sit there and it's called the vicarious enjoyment of sin through other people's lives. And one commentator said it is the final step of reprobation on a nation, where we won't do it ourselves, but we'd be entertained by others that do.

In the America today, we're witnessing a landslide erosion of godliness. Now I'm going to give you an example, but I want to make a statement before I do. I am not against gay people, and neither is this church.

You have been sold a false bill of goods. You've been led to believe that you were born a certain way when God says no, you were born in the image of God. You've been led to believe that pursuing a certain lifestyle and trying to make it legitimate in the sight of the nation will somehow make it legitimate in the sight of God.

When God says no, this has fallen far short of what I intended for you the day that you were conceived in your mother's womb. You'll never be happy in this lifestyle. There's something of your conscience that will always tell you that it's fallen far short from what you've been intended to be.

And if you can hear me today, Jesus Christ stepped into a pulpit years ago in a synagogue and said the Spirit of God is upon me because he has anointed me to set free those that are held in captivity, to give sight to those that are blind. They don't understand the ways of God, they don't see the way out of the dilemma, they don't understand the kind of a future they can have. To heal those that have been bruised in heart, and many many people go into these confusing lifestyles because of the woundings of broken homes, broken families, abusive parents, being abused as a child or children or teenagers themselves, and it creates a confusion in the mind.

Listening to media, following music of people who themselves are confused and producing that confusion. Now I want you to know today that Jesus loves you, he passionately loves you. So don't turn me off if you're on the internet listening to me today.

The only thing I've ever seen that God hates in the scripture is religious hypocrisy. It's the only thing I've ever seen that he truly hates and truly evoked the anger of Jesus Christ. Because religious hypocrisy creates a powerless church and keeps you in captivity when Jesus died to set you free and to call you home to be his own.

I want to tell you today God has something much better for your life than what you've chosen for yourself. Time magazine just came out with an article gay marriage already won, and you'll see on the cover if you haven't seen it yet one cover has two men kissing and the other has two women kissing each other. But here's what it says on the inside, and I want you to carefully consider this in the light of what I'm speaking this morning.

In recent days, weeks, and months the verdict on same-sex marriage has been rendered has been rendered by rapidly shifting public opinion and the spectacle of swing vote politicians scrambling to keep up with it. With stunning speed, a concept dismissed even by most gay rights leaders just 20 years ago is now embraced by half or more of all Americans with support among young voters running as high as four to one. Like a dam that springs a little leak that turns into a trickle and then burst into a flood, the wall of public opinion is crumbling.

Elected leaders who once faithfully pledged to protect tradition have lined up to announce their conversions. Remember the scripture says when you hold the truth in unrighteousness your word is worth nothing. The only mention of the church is found in the last second to last page, and it says discrimination against homosexuals was not part of the natural order.

It was the arbitrary invention of a particular time and place, the factious and violent medieval church. The only mention of the church. We're living in a moment in history where Goliath has risen again, and Goliath is saying I defy you to present somebody that we may fight together, and if you can't then you will serve us.

We either rise as a church age in America, we either get back to the prayer meeting, we either start preaching the Word of God, we either rise up fearlessly empowered and moved by the love of God declaring the full counsel of Jesus Christ, or we will become servants to godlessness. The freedoms in the house of God will be lost. Mark this day and mark these words.

The freedom of speech will be lost. What I've shared today from a heart that is burdened to see people set free from sin and set free from lifestyles that are a robbery of what God intended them to be will soon become hate speech and soon become against the law. We're not very far from it.

Some of the architects of this battle against what we consider in the church of Jesus Christ to be morality, three or so of them, have said this is only step one. Once this battle is won then we're going to be fighting for multiple partner marriages in America. The ultimate goal is to completely eradicate the Judeo-Christian view of marriage and the family.

Goliath said if you cannot put somebody forth to fight this battle and win it, then you will be our servants. And this is exactly where we are. We're on two mountains.

There's a valley between us. And the scripture talks about Saul and those who are with him, fearful, afraid, polishing their armor, perhaps just coming home from their latest spiritual warfare conference. But there's nobody there with enough courage to go into the valley and face this giant.

Every man has, you see, because their focus has been on their own preservation. We're living in a church age where our theological focus has been mostly on self-preservation. How I can become a better person.

How I can smile from Monday to Friday. How can avoid conflict at all costs. How I can be richer.

How I can have a nicer car, bigger slice of the socio-economic pie. How I can be somebody. So now we're facing a situation in time where it might cost somebody something to stand up.

There's only one solution. There only ever has been one. And there only ever remain ones.

And that is God must have a people who are fearless because they have personally experienced his supernatural power in unseen places. Into the midst of this comes a young man called David. And he comes to this king called Saul.

And he says, let no man's heart fail him because of this giant. Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. I will fight.

You guys, you got the size. You got the muscles. You got the training.

You got the armor. But you lost touch with God. You don't know who God is anymore.

You're no longer really gripped with a passion to see the glory of God revealed in the earth again. And to see the souls of people captivated set free. And Saul said to David, you're not, you're not able to fight against this Philistine.

You're only a youth. And he's a man of war from his youth. He's saying to him, listen, look how small you are.

It's as if the devil now is using Saul to try to discourage faith from coming back into the battle again. Look how small you are. You're only a kid.

And this guy is nine feet tall. His spear is 15 feet long. He, the coat he wears, the armor he wears weighs more than you when you're wet.

How in the world are you going to fight with him? How are you ever going to stand up? How are you ever going to win this battle? David said to Saul, well you see, I was keeping my father's sheep and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of my flock. And you see, I was given that by my father to keep. It might be just a lamb that was missing and maybe nobody would have ever seen it, but I saw it.

And I went out after him and I smote him and delivered it out of his mouth. And you see, the lion rose up against me and he was taller than I was. But when he rose up against me, I grabbed ahold of his mane.

The Spirit of God came upon me and I killed this lion. And he said, I won the victory over the lion and the bear. And you see, this godless Philistine that's standing up and challenging the honor of God will be just like one of them because he has defied the armies of the living God.

He'd already seen the miraculous. He'd already won battles in secret places. And that's why I've so cried from this pulpit and told you, don't play games.

Don't pretend to be free if you're not. Go into that secret closet of prayer. Lay hold of God in that secret place.

Lay hold of the victory of Christ on the cross and say, you damnable devil, you're not having my mind. You're not getting my heart. You're not getting my hope.

Take him by the mane and say, I don't care how big you are. I don't care how much you roar against me. I don't care how small I am in your sight.

I have the Spirit of God upon me. And in the name of Jesus, I'll take authority over you. We must hold as our principal concern in this generation, not the preservation of ourselves, but the honor of God.

That's the key. The honor of God is more important than you and I preserving ourselves. The honor of God in America.

The honor of God in his house. The honor of God among the unsaved. The honor of God in our cities.

Saul came to David and he said, here, put this on, this armor, because you see, it is true back in a few days earlier, it had won some victories against the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, against Zoba and the Philistines, the Amalekites. It had won victories. The armor did have marks on it.

He could point to them and say, well, here's where I won the victory. And yes, our past strategies in America, we can justly appoint, or point rather, to some victories. There are pastors listening, and we'll be listening in the weeks ahead, that say, Pastor, aren't you a little extreme? I mean, we did this.

We tried these methodologies and they did work. Our church grew from 200 to 400. And I agree with you, and David could agree with Saul.

Yes, there are nicks on your armor, and you have won past victories, but we've come to a time, we've come to a season, where this armor no longer is of any value. This armor will not win this battle. It is only faith now that will win.

This was armor that had a purpose for another time. And David said, I can't go with these, for I've not proved these. I'm not going out to the Philistines with a survey and say, Goliath, I'm sorry you're really ticked off at us, but what will it take for you to come to our church? A nine-foot bed, 25-foot swimming pool, what will it take to get you to come to our church? Now, it may have worked in some communities for a time, and all of the gimmicks that we brought into the house of God may have had some effect, but now we're living with a Goliath on the other side of the valley, and there's nothing but faith that is going to make a difference in this generation that you and I are now living in.

And David said, I've not proven these things. They may work for you, but they've never worked for me. All I've ever known is faith.

I've seen the miraculous power of God. I've won some victories, Saul, you see, in places that are not visible. Your victories were visible and measurable by your own standards, but you see, I've won some victories that were supernatural.

I've won some victories that only God could have given me. I've found the strength that can only come from the hand of God to deliver those that are being taken into the mouth of the lion and stolen from that which God would have from them. Now, I've found some other weaponry, and Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verses 4 and 5, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations. What was the imagination in this case? Goliath imagined that he, because of his size and experience, that the Philistine army, because of their seeming ferocity and mockery of the children of God and the people of God, that these things could be victorious, but they had failed to realize that they had exalted themselves against the knowledge of God, and all that God required was somebody of faith to rise up again. Somebody without a pedigree.

Somebody who's not playing the carnal game in the house of God. Somebody who's won battles in secret that nobody else knows about, but you know about it. We must not be hindered by the threats and the ridicule of the godless.

It said the Philistine looked about and saw David and disdained him, for he was only a youth and ruddy and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said to David, am I just a dog that you come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. You and I have to press through the threats, the ridicule, the scorn.

Verses 45 to 47 tells us that our primary motivation must be for the honor of God and the returning of all people to the knowledge of his mercy and power. Then said David to the Philistine, you come to me with a sword and a spear and a shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. You've defied God.

You've stood against God. You've mocked God. You stand here with your strength, you stand here with your weaponry, you stand here with your boasts, you stand here claiming that you can make us servants to godlessness, but I want you to know something.

You're not standing against us, David said, you're standing against God. These are his armies, these are his people, and this day, he said, the Lord will deliver you into my hand and I will smite you. Verse 47, he says, this assembly will know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands.

No, we're not going to match you force for force, and we're not going to win this in the political arena, and we're not going to look for funding to sue you as you're suing so many Christian organizations throughout the country. No, sir, we're going into the prayer closet. We're going to lay hold of the ark of God, and for the glory of God, and for the souls of men, we're going to come out of that place strengthened by the Spirit of God, and we're going to ask God to do what only God can do, because you have defied the name of God.

You have stood against the name of God. Now keep in mind, folks, and hear me clearly on this, we're not fighting at any point against any people, ever. These are spiritual, this is spiritual wickedness in high places, demonic powers.

These people are simply pawns of a power that they don't yet understand. They will one day when they die, they'll know whose side they've been fighting on. No, we're not fighting against people, we're fighting for people.

We're fighting for all people in our generation. Scripture tells us that Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to David, and David hasted and ran towards the army to meet the Philistine. As you and I get up and move forward in the supernatural to face the challenges of our day, everything you naturally fear will start moving towards you to convince you and I that our faith in God is useless.

Everything that you feared will come against you, but we must look these man-made giants in the eye and say, not so fast, Goliath, not so fast. In Christ, we have the power to cast down these imaginations. David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and threw it and smote the Philistine in his forehead, and the stone sunk into his forehead and he fell upon his face to the earth.

Some people say, I heard a preacher say one time, that's as deep as anything had ever gone into the head of Goliath in his lifetime. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and smote the Philistine, and there was no sword in the hand of David. In other words, he was not fighting with human strategy or effort.

The only thing he had was a complete dependency on God. He put off Saul's armor, and in this generation we must put off the gimmickry of man that has almost rendered powerless the house of God. And he went down to a brook and he picked up five stones.

I don't know how long those stones had been there to be made smooth, perhaps a thousand, maybe five thousand years. I don't know how long it took, but they were fashioned in a sense, they were weapons that were fashioned by the hand of God. The weapons of prayer, the weapons of being set apart for the kingdom of God, the weapons of understanding Scripture to the point where what it says takes precedent over what everything of this world is trying to tell you.

And he picked up those things that were given by the hand of God, and he went into the battle with them. And all of the types that we will ever need are found in Scripture. All through Scripture you'll see this repeated over and over and over again, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

I remember in Ezekiel, God said through the prophet Ezekiel, I wanted to not judge the nation, and I sought for man to stand in the gap. He couldn't find anybody. It's not that there weren't people attending this, the synagogues, it's not that there weren't people studying the Scriptures, it's not that there weren't people who really I think in great measure were righteous.

The problem was, I don't think there was anybody left that believed that God would show mercy or he was big enough to win the battle. That's what he was looking for. Everybody was looking into the nearest book on a calm day to see the reflection and saying, well certainly not me.

And in spite of all the study of the fact that God used the Esther's and the Gideon's and Moses and the barren wombs of Elizabeth and Hannah and Mary, and you look through all of these stories of truth that had been left, and they read it and they knew it but they put it away and didn't believe it, and turned to natural reasonings and natural strategies, and that has been the great, great folly of our generation. It has been the great folly of the church in America today. But the Scripture says today, if you can hear his voice, don't harden your hearts, as in the day of provocation, when they tempted and tried God in the wilderness and they said, can God furnish a table in this wilderness? Can God really provide? Can God really do miracles? Can God really be God? And the Lord said to the writer, because of that I swore to them they'll never enter into my rest.

They'll not know my victory. What a tragedy. But I have to believe with all my heart that there are places throughout this country, and maybe there's some of the smaller churches we're helping in inner-city New York, and maybe there are many that are gathered here today who have the courage to say, God Almighty, I'm going to win that secret battle.

I'm not going down to the devil in this area of my life or my mind. I'm going in. I'm going to lay hold of that lion and that bear that's trying to devour that which God has given to me to keep, and I'm going to win.

And when I win, I'm going to know who God is, and when I walk out, I'm going to know what God can do. I'm not going to stand on the mountainside facing what we have to face today with areas of unsundered defeat in my own life, for that is a sure way to be robbed of faith. Saul had an unsundered area in his life, and the unsundered area of his life was simply the preservation of Saul, of himself.

He's unwilling, in a sense, to die to himself that Christ, that God might become everything through him. I challenge you with everything in my heart. As God lives, win those secret battles now.

Go into the prayer closet and fight it out in the strength of God. Don't let the devil even have a little thing and say, well, all right, he took one lamb, I've got 99 left, so big deal. Who's going to notice? No, go after that.

Go after it, because it is the essential school of faith. It's the school of faith in God. It's the school of saying, no, we don't give an inch.

We don't give a foot. We give no ground to the devil. We stand up.

Do folks realize that 70% of this country still believe in God? But we're just like the Israelites were when they were in Egypt, more and mightier, but just unaware of it. The time has come to stand. The time has come to win.

The time has come to declare the Word of God unashamedly. The time has come to fight for those that are lost. Fight for children that are not born yet.

Fight for those that are in our schools and homes and streets that don't even know there is a God. The time has come to fight for our families, fight for our marriages, fight for the future of this nation. And I'm not talking about a fight that produces division or harms anyone.

It's the kind of a fight that brings people into the life they've always longed for in Christ. It's the kind of a fight that doesn't discriminate, but opens the floodgate to eternal life to anyone who wants to come to Christ and treats with kindness all men, even in disagreement. It's that kind of a fight.

God help us now, because these are dark days and ominous days. It's going to require men and women of faith. I don't know what you're going to do.

For those who are living to preserve yourself, I fear for you, because the day is coming when that's going to be very difficult. And Father, I thank you for giving me the strength to speak this morning. I thank you, God, for the victory that you are willing to give us in secret places, the courage that you will give us to stand in this hour and say what needs to be said.

I thank you that you put a love in our hearts for all people, and we stand here as no one's judge. Give us the heart of Christ who said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they do.

Give us the grace to make a difference. Now we're going to worship just for a moment, and if you need courage to win a secret battle, that's where it all begins. Something not seen by men, but seen by God and known by you.

And you need courage to win that battle. I want to open this altar and ask you to come, and we're going to pray and believe God for you for a miracle. In the annex, if you could step between the screens and Roxbury.

God bless you this morning. If you could step between the screens as well. Let's stand, and if the Lord's drawing you, you need courage to win a secret battle.

That's what he's put on my heart this morning. Just come, please. Just come to this altar, and we'll pray together, and we'll believe God together.

Lift your hands, please, those that are here at the altar and those who'd like to in the congregation. Almighty God, put fight in us, Lord. Help us, God, not to lay down before the roarings of the enemy in those secret areas of our lives where we fight, and nobody but you sees it, Lord.

Give us courage, oh God, and let your Holy Spirit come upon us to win these victories in secret that we might know that you're a supernatural God. I thank you, Lord, that you will give courage and strength to those who fight with suicide and depression, to those who fight with a sense of hopelessness for the future, to those who are beaten by regrets of the past. You'll close these doors and open the ones that need to be opened before us.

And Father, I'm believing you, Lord, that we will be a victorious church in New York City. I'm believing it, God, for the churches of Feed New York. I'm believing it, Lord, for other churches throughout the city, that we will be a victorious testimony of Christ in this hour we're living in.

God, help us not to draw back. Help us to go forward. Give us grace to love all people, even our enemies, Lord.

Give us grace to love those who oppose us and even hate us. Give us power to see them set free. Give us that love of Christ that passes knowledge for all people everywhere.

Give us a voice, Lord, to make a difference in this generation. And let the glory of the Lord touch your house again. Oh God, we ask you that the thousand fires in New York City truly be a thousand churches on fire for you of every denomination, every race, every color, every culture.

Oh God Almighty, Lord, the scripture says, when kings of the earth gather together to cast off as they see the cords of God's people, that you will laugh from heaven and you will have them in derision. And Lord, you will do what you've already destined to do. God, lift us out of the natural and bring us back into the supernatural.

We ask you, Lord, that miracles, I ask for miracles at this altar, miracles of healing, miracles of deliverance, miracles of power, miracles of speech, miracles of callings into the ministry, miracles, oh God, of the giftings that can only come from you. We don't want just to be free, we want to make others free by the strength of Christ. You are a miracle working God and we ask you to stretch out your hand and bring healing and bring it through our lives, oh God.

Father, let this house be filled with testimonies of people who have been set free by the power of God. And Lord, I thank you with all my heart today. Let this be an awesome day for the kingdom of God.

And Lord, I thank you for it and praise you for it in the mighty and unmatched and all-powerful name of Jesus Christ. Amen and amen, hallelujah.

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