

# Paying the Price of Freedom

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of personal sacrifice and action in the pursuit of true freedom and spiritual awakening.*

**Duration:** 47:37

**Scripture:** Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Freedom", "Christian Courage"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of paying the price of freedom, drawing from the story in Mark chapter 5 where Jesus delivers a demon-possessed man. The speaker challenges the listeners to be willing to separate from uncleanness, embrace faith when the familiar is taken away, and be ready to suffer personal loss for the gain of others. The message calls for courage to speak about Jesus and to be willing to pay the price for the freedom of others, echoing the example of Jesus and the early disciples.

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## Transcript

If you'll turn to Mark chapter 5, please, with me. Mark chapter 5. I want to speak to you this morning about paying the price of freedom. Paying the price of freedom.

Now, Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart for your word. I thank you, Jesus, that you are guiding us. You're leading us, Lord, to something of your life.

You're taking us to a place, Lord, that we can't go in our own strength. And you're promising to give us the strength to survive and thrive there if we're willing to follow you. I pray from my own heart, God, give me the grace to walk in what you've given me to speak this morning.

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that you will deliver us from all forms of powerless religious expression and bring us into the very and actual life of God in Jesus Christ. Help us, Lord, to glorify your name in our generation, in this city and on the earth, Lord. Wherever these messages will carry, let it bring glory to the name of Jesus.

We ask you, Lord, for an end time awakening. God almighty of your people, especially in this country. Father, we thank you for this.

Help us to hear these words and to understand them. And we thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Mark chapter 5, please, paying the price of freedom. Verse 1, and they came to the other side of the sea into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs and no man could bind him, no, not with chains.

Because that he'd been often bound with fetters and chains and the chains had been plucked asunder by him. And the fetters broken in pieces, neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.

But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him. He cried with a loud voice and said, what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

And he asked him, what is thy name? And he answered, saying, my name is Legion, for we are many. And he besought him that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

And all the devils besought him, saying, send us into the swine that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea.

They were about 2,000 and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

And they come to Jesus and see him that was possessed with the devil and had the legion sitting and clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts, paying the price of freedom.

You know, when I say these words, paying the price of freedom in military terms, when we talk about this, our minds instinctively understand what that means. It means separation from family. Often it means the loss of familiar comforts and security.

And for our soldiers, for our military, it means personal hardship but under the point of the loss of limb and even life for the benefit of others. That's what it means for troops in this country to pay the price of freedom. And I thank God with all my heart and I salute them from the depths of my soul, the men and women in uniform in this country.

So many have paid that price that you and I can be free here today in this sanctuary that we can clap our hands, we can enjoy the presence of God because somebody else fought for us, and had they not done so, this would be a much different looking country and a much different gathering than it is today. It was at the cross that Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price for our freedom. After he rose from the dead, Jesus put a deposit of his life and strength inside of us as his body, as his representatives on the earth.

That through us, his hands and his heart might continue to be extended to the lost and the captivated of this world. Paul says in Romans chapter 12 and verse 1, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Paul considered it reasonable to be given for the sake of others.

That's why this man had an inner strength that could allow him to pray and stand on the deck of a perishing ship in Acts chapter 27, filled with divine purpose and compassion and direction for a directionless generation. Because he didn't consider it exemplary service, he considered it reasonable. Understanding what Christ had done for him.

Understanding that Christ had left him in the world as a guidepost and a sign to others, a voice calling people out of darkness and into the marvelous light and life of Jesus Christ. Thank God for men like Paul. Thank God for women like Esther.

Thank God for those throughout history who have not regarded their own safety, but have gone into the presence of God and have come out of God's presence with something that has brought divine life, hardship to them, but divine life to others. Thank God for all of those who have walked before us in the church of Jesus Christ. To the shedding of their blood, in many cases, that we might have the freedom that we have today.

The glorious revelation that's been preserved for us in the holy scriptures. The light, the guidance that God is willing to give to all of us who turn to him, no matter our situation. The tendency of some people, and it has been problematic throughout generations, however, is to fall in love and in line with religion that has no personal cost to it.

That has always been the problem. We understand some of these things, but we move to an easier path. We move to something that costs less.

You imagine the shame of an army in this country that we sent overseas, but they wouldn't fight. Imagine if they stayed in their tents, studying war tactics and singing battle songs. And yet they came home, nobody ever having fired a shot, no victory won.

And you would ask them and say, well, how was it over there? And they say, oh, it was wonderful. We gathered together, we stayed in our tents. We studied battle strategy and we sang war songs.

But we never left our tents. We never fought. No victory was won.

But our uniforms looked really good and our shoes were polished. It was an amazing journey. Folks, we'd be ashamed.

We'd hang our heads in shame. And we would realize that sooner or later with that kind of an army, our freedoms would be at, our very freedoms would be at stake. Having somehow allowed ourselves to fall into such an abyss of thinking that somehow just simply by showing up without paying any personal cost whatsoever that there's going to be a victory, which never would be the case in military terms and never really is the case in spiritual terms either.

Now, Luke chapter 10, Jesus gives us a clear illustration of this in the parable of the man who was beaten and left for dead on the Jericho Road. Now, it's true that most religion seeks to advance its cause and influence among people. Everybody wants an awakening.

In other words, I used to travel as a revivalist, so I understand this. I would go into churches in communities, cities, towns, and they would, churches that were more or less losing their fervor for the things of God. It was becoming routine, coming to the house of the Lord.

It was becoming boring, and infighting was beginning to happen. And so I would be called to do a series of messages, perhaps three, four, five nights in a row, to try to stir the embers of that church to see if there's still some fire there that could come back to the fore again. But everybody wants an awakening.

And the concept of awakening is we come back to the realities of who we are in Christ, what we're called to do in Christ. We get excited again about the things of God. And because we get excited, then people from the outside start to come in.

There's a great measure of truth to that. They want an awakening to the realities of God, firstly in themselves, and secondly, of course, in the society around them. And we see that in this chapter of Scripture.

Now, God had provided for them what was really necessary for a spiritual awakening, and you'll understand that in a moment. There was a man laying on the road. He was beaten by thieves, and he was left stripped of his garment, and he was left there for dead.

Everything was already provided for a spiritual awakening. If the people could see it and wanted to see it. But he tells us of a priest who just saw this, but passed it by.

And in my mind, I'm thinking, this priest, like every other religionist throughout history, he would want an awakening. He would want some kind of recognition that his relationship with God, in fact, was the real one. And there'd be a stirring in him.

Now, I was thinking as I studied this, perhaps he thought by knowledge and a display of attentiveness to knowledge that people would suddenly come in. If he was smarter than the rest of society, if he knew all of the Greek and all the Hebrew, and he could baffle people with theology, then suddenly the ranks would be filled, and the unsaved masses would start to come in, and there'd be a recognition that this is the true God. There's a great measure of truth to this, of course, but in itself, knowledge can just be an accumulation of words without power.

It can be a form of religiousness that doesn't lead. Remember, Paul warned that in the last days, people would be ever learning. Ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Ever learning, but never letting the learning bring them to where true spiritual life really is, because they were not willing to pay the price of where that knowledge leads. It leads somewhere, the more that we learn. Remember, he who increases knowledge, the scripture says, increases sorrow.

Think about the Levite, the second person who sees this man that's been provided for his own awakening, but the Levite is from a long line of worshipers, and perhaps he thinks that maybe he's got a new song in his pocket. I don't know. Maybe he's some new form of worship.

Maybe he's got an idea of how we can enliven the worship in the house of God. Boy, if we become the church, if we become the synagogue in his case of worship, everybody will come and acknowledge that God is among us. And if I could say something about this country for at least the 20 years I've been here, the last two decades, I could call them the decades of who can worship better than who.

There's, it's all been about worship. There's been very little of the word of God, although there has been some, of course, but it's been about worship. Everything, who's worshiping where, and what are they singing now? What kind of songs are they singing? Thinking that somehow this is going to awaken us.

It's going to awaken the church. It's going to awaken the country. Only to find out that we're now facing the landslide of a moral abyss in our society.

We're sliding farther and farther, farther and farther away at an ever-increasing pace now. And so the knowledge hasn't done it. And the worship, as good as it's been for many lives, and I'm not downplaying any of that, hasn't brought about an awakening in this country that we call the United States of America.

And now the third person who comes along, he's the least defined by religion of the three. I don't think he knows much Hebrew and Greek. I really don't.

He's a Samaritan. He obviously doesn't. I don't know if he has a song or if he can even sing.

He's not a person of any great report. But this man was able to be moved by compassion. And his compassion moved him to action.

And his action led him to personal sacrifice for the sake of another person. He saw this man on the side of the road wounded, naked, and beaten. And he simply couldn't let his learning and couldn't let his worship, as it was, cause him to pass him by as others could.

He didn't have a substitute religion that can come in and substitute for the true work of God. And so he stopped and he bent down and he poured oil and wine into the woundings of this man and set up upon his own conveyance and took him to an inn and told the innkeeper, look after this man. I'll be back this way again.

And whatever it costs you to get him back on his feet, I'll pay the bill for it. You see, he was willing to pay the price of freedom for another man's freedom, not his own, but the freedom of another man. I was having a theological debate one time with a friend.

And suddenly a question came into my mind and I asked him, I said, how much study does it take to give a hungry man one half of your sandwich? How many Greek words do you need to know? How much Hebrew do you have to have under your belt to give a hungry man one half of your sandwich? We see that when the spirit of God truly comes upon any people, the generosity of God is an immediate response because we've become animated by the life of Christ within us. It's an evidence of the spirit of God. Learning is one of the evidences, the ability to understand the scriptures.

I know that and I appreciate it as much as anybody. The spirit of God gives us the ability to worship God because of the change he's bringing into our lives and just for the understanding of his mercy, his power, and who he is. But ultimately, when the spirit of God comes upon us, remember the scripture says where the spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty.

And the word liberty in the New Testament, if you look at it, it means generosity. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there's a generosity of God is not only released into the life of those of us who believe, but is released through the lives of those of us who believe. A generosity of forgiveness, a generosity of compassion, a generosity of the willingness in our hearts to be willing to say, God, if I perish, I perish.

But Lord, I can't let the people around me die in their sin when I know such a great truth. I can't let people starve when the hand of God is willing to be poured out through me to make a difference. I can't let this generation live in confusion.

This fatherless generation, when God has called me to be a spiritual father, or in your case, a spiritual mother to so many in this time in which we're living. God, help me open my heart. God, give me the generosity of Joseph that I'd be willing to open the storehouse of what you planted within this body, this earthly tabernacle.

Don't let me keep the door shut. Help me, Lord God, to be willing to open the door of my heart and my life and to be poured out for the sake of others. That's not something that comes naturally.

Without the spirit of God, you won't do it and neither will I. But where the spirit of the Lord is, there's generosity. Where the spirit of God truly is. In Acts chapter 4, there was a threatening against the testimony of Christ.

Government leaders, religious leaders rose up and began to threaten Peter and John and by extension, the rest of the church of that time with repercussion. If you don't start, if you don't be quiet, if you don't stop promoting this healing and talking about this man, Jesus Christ, we're going to make things real hot for you if you don't. We're going to make it difficult.

But the scripture says they went into a prayer meeting and they asked God to stretch forth his hand through them and begin to heal in an even greater way. In other words, they were saying, God, whatever got us into trouble, do more of it that it will bring us into more trouble than we've been in. And then when they prayed, it says in Acts 4 31, the place was shaken where they're assembled together.

Oh God, would you shake this place? That's the ground, my heart, this place first, this place. Second, would you shake all of us? Holy spirit of the living God, would you come? Would you shake us? Would you shake where we're standing? Would you shake us Lord in the inner man? Would you shake us loose from thinking that isn't complete? Would you shake us God from all of the prisons that hold us captive and don't let us be the people that God is calling us to be? Would you shake us loose Lord from our religious pursuits that cause us to pass by human need with such an indifference, such an unmovable heart with the incredible resource that God's given us. God, would you shake us? And when they prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Now look at what happened. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul and neither said any of them said that anything that they owned was his own but they had all things common in immediate compassion and immediate giving. Now I'm not talking about foolish giving.

I'm not talking about compulsion giving. I'm talking about a compassion in the heart that's birthed of God that when a legitimate need is presented, they're willing to part with that which they had in measure, at least to meet the needs of others. Now in our opening text, we see the dilemma that confronts any of us who want to be significantly used of God and I use the word significantly in there because it's my cry lately.

I've been praying a prayer. Oh God, would you help me? You've helped me all these years. You've helped me.

It's been miraculous this journey. You've helped me get over anger. You've helped me God to get through selfishness.

You've helped me to be a father. You helped me to be a husband. You helped me to be a friend.

You helped me to care when I didn't care. You helped me to believe when in the natural, everything I was being led to look foolish. You helped me to give when everything in my upbringing would have taught me not to.

You've led me through doors and into places that are truly miraculous. I have lived to see genocides in measure come to an end. I've lived to see civil war broken.

I've lived to see poverty destroyed and prosperity come into communities. I've lived to see it, God. But now my prayer is because I read in the scriptures that the wine at the end of the feast is supposed to taste better than the wine at the beginning of the banquet.

I read in the scriptures that the glory of the latter house should be greater than the former. And I'm not content to rest on past victories. That was wonderful.

Thank God. But I'm moving forward now. As Paul said, I'm leaving behind what needs to be left behind and moving forward to a high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

God, help me. God, help me to have this generosity of God in my heart. God, help me to be willing to be given in the measure of strength that I have left.

You know, there's something in all of us that when you hit a certain age, you'd like to stop and smell the roses for a little while. You'd like to travel and let somebody else bear the heat of the day. You'd like to pass the torch with great gratitude and just go off into some kind of a spiritual sunset and enjoy a bit of life.

But I've been praying, God, deliver me from that. And don't ever let it grip my heart. God, I want to be used of you more.

I want to pay the price, whatever that's going to be. And I don't have a complete vision of what that is. But whatever it's going to be, that others might be free.

You see, in Mark chapter 5, verses 16 and 17, we see the dilemma that confronts any of us who want to be significantly used of God. It says, and they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed of the devil and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

Firstly, the willingness to put away all uncleanness. Now, there's a lot of different schools of thought as to who was actually raising these pigs. This area was known as Decapolis.

It was the Gadarenes, was the place where the demon possessed man was. But it was known as Decapolis because Rome, after they conquered this part of the world, set up about 10 settlements there. And there were mixtures of people.

There were Jewish people there, but there were mixtures of people from other parts of the world. Now, some say it's not possible the Jewish people would be raising pigs because they were considered unclean. So these were obviously Gentiles.

But yet we run into a problem because the Gadarene demoniac, for example, Jesus himself said deliverance is the children's bread. The gospel at this point had not gone to the Gentiles. There's a dilemma with this.

And one of the commentators, it's in Hendrickson's commentary, I think said it the best. You see, it was not forbidden for Jews to breed swine for other purposes, just it was forbidden for them to eat them. They were an unclean animal, but they were not forbidden to breed them.

And this one commentator believed that they were actually Jewish people breeding these swines, these pigs to feed to the Roman army. So, we have to be willing to put away all uncleanness. Everywhere where we found ourselves close, if we're going to, if we are going to pay the price of freedom, that means things that some others can do, we can't do.

They can watch. If people don't want to be used of God, let them watch what they want to watch. Let them go where they want to go.

But those who want to be used of God, there is a separation that is required to the things of God, to the heart of God, to the word of God. Don't tell me that it's okay for you to go to clubs just because you don't drink. What are you listening to sitting at the table? What are you thinking when you're on the dance floor? No, no, no, no.

It's not good enough just to be in close association with these things. I'm talking about those who want to be used. All things are lawful, Paul said, but not all things are expedient.

There are certain things. I remember when I was just a young Christian, my wife and I came home. We would spend all day in church.

I loved church. I loved the house of God. I loved the worship of God.

Sometimes I dreaded even the thought of having to go home at the end of a Sunday. We'd be there all day Sunday. I remember my co-workers used to think I was crazy.

They'd say, what did you do Sunday? I said, I was in church. Oh, how was that? Was it a nice hour? I said, no, it was 12 hours. Actually, it was, we started eight in the morning and we finished at eight o'clock at night.

And I remember one particular, I'm a brand new Christian. I've never seen a message on any of this stuff. And I remember Pastor Teresa and I, we came home after a Sunday service and we had a television in our living room and we snuggled up and we turned it on.

And the favorite show at that time was called Dallas. Anybody here old enough to remember that? And so I've just been all day in the house of God. And I remember, I remember we turned it on.

And in the first 10 minutes we were sitting there, I turned to my wife. I said, we've just, we've just watched a murder. We've watched an adultery.

We've heard at least six or seven lies. And there was, there was a theft is all in the first 10 minutes of this show. And I said, I don't want to watch this anymore.

I don't want to be entertained by this. I've just come from the presence of God and somehow I can't help but feel that God has more for us than this. So let's get rid of this thing.

And we both agreed. Now that was 34 years ago. I had a television repair guy down the road.

His name was George. I still remember his name. I called him the next day.

I said, Hey, George, you want a free television? He said, sure. So we'll come get it. It's yours.

And that was the end of it. The willingness not to say I won't watch a video, not to say I won't watch a documentary, something educational, but there's gotta be a willingness to put away uncleanness. If you want to make a significant difference in this generation, if you truly want to be awakened, you have to have a willingness to put away all of these things that are questionable in your life.

I was a soloist in the police choir for several, for a few years. And one of the key singers, actually, when I was in my late twenties, and I remember I got under conviction. We were singing songs that were not really harmful.

I don't think to anybody, but it was, I couldn't sing them anymore. And there was one in particular, it was a song. I forget.

It's called with a little bit of luck. It says the Lord above made man to help his neighbor, no matter where on land or sea or home or something like that. But with a little bit of luck, when he comes around, you won't be home.

And I remember we're rehearsing this thing and I came under conviction. Something was coming out of my mouth that I honestly felt God's calling me to something higher than this kind of speech. It might be okay for other people, but it wasn't okay for me.

I hope you understand what I'm talking about. If you want to be significantly used by God, there's certain songs you just don't sing. There's certain books you don't read.

There's certain movies you don't watch. There's certain places you don't go. There's certain people you don't hang around with.

And when I resigned from the choir, I remember a couple of Christian men came to me and they were upset with me and they said, you're judging us. Look, I'm not judging anybody. I can't sing this stuff any longer.

I have an inner feeling in my heart that I'm called to something deeper than this. I'm not judging you for singing it. You go ahead and sing what you feel led to.

But I feel a higher calling in my life. I can't explain it. God is drawing me to something.

And for those who want to be significantly used by God, there has to be a willingness to put away things that others might be okay with. I trust you understand what I'm talking about. It's a separation to God.

It's a clear focus. I want to be used of God. I want my life to count for something in the kingdom of God.

I'm willing to pay the price that others may be free. Now folks, you see me in this pulpit Sunday morning and Sunday night. You see me on the platform Sunday worshiping and you say, man, that guy must live in a suit.

His hair must always be in place like that. He must always be excited. Be exciting to live at his house and see what his week is like.

Well, a lot of my week is spent groaning. I'm alone most of the time because my wife is in Pennsylvania at Summit International School of Ministry. Sometimes I get up in the morning and I've got to fight to break through the fog to be able to just worship God, to be able to get into the word of God.

It's a long, narrow, lonely road that I live on. But there's got to be a willingness in everyone's heart to pay the price that other people might be free. If I, if I wasn't willing, if I wasn't willing to walk that road, if I was going to be a social gadabout and out on the, not, not in the wintertime, but out in the golf course or playing hockey on Saturday afternoon, you'd have some shallow message here this morning with three rhyming B's and three C's and three D's.

There'd be nothing from God. Be an empty heart that you'd leave here with. You wouldn't remember anything I've said no matter how wonderfully I made it all rhyme because it's not a living word.

A living word doesn't come from those who are not willing to pay the price of being separated to God. And secondly, we see in these, in this society, there was an unwillingness to embrace faith when the familiar is taken away. Here they have a choice to make.

You have a free man who nobody could tame. They all knew he was demon possessed. They tried to chain him even they, and the chains would be broken.

Most everybody was afraid of him. Now he's sitting in his right mind. So you have on one hand, you have this man who's completely free.

And on the other hand, you've got 2000 pigs that are dead in the water. At this point, the society had to be willing to embrace faith when the familiar is taken away. And folks, listen to me carefully.

The familiar is about to be taken away from many of us. The society is going into uncharted waters. The days ahead are going to be extremely difficult.

Make no mistake about it. The familiar is going to be taken away. But if you and I are going to be able to make a difference, we have to be willing to embrace faith.

Faith says, God, take away whatever needs to be taken away. And thank you for this man who sits here clothed and in his right mind. Let that now be multiplied a thousand fold.

Let people be set free. Let demonic strongholds be broken. Let confusion be brought into clarity of thought.

Let those who are uncovered by the grace of God now find themselves sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in their right minds. Oh God, if you have to take away the familiar, take away the familiar. If you have to remove anything, remove it.

I found myself this week again. Twice I've lost my home. Twice everything has been taken away.

It makes it easier when you're praying about taking it away the third time. Been there, done that. Thank God he has been faithful all the way.

And thirdly, what really confronted these people of that society was their willingness, whether or not they were willing to suffer personal loss for the gain of others. And the question had to be in everyone's mind, was one man worth the price? Was one man worth all the loss that we have incurred, all the difficulty that

has come? And you see, this was a society on this side of the sea that was at a juncture of a decision. If we truly walk with this man, Jesus, it's going to cost us something.

If we truly walk with him, we've suffered the loss of 2000 pigs, and who knows what else we're going to lose. Is it worth it? And somehow they came to the conclusion it wasn't. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

And this is exactly what we have done in this country. We came to the conclusion that the Christ that calls us to suffer loss, the Christ that calls us to live by faith, the Christ that calls us to walk through troubled waters for the sake of others, the Christ of Paul that could allow him to break bread and rejoice over the simple fact that 276 people were going to be given an option at least to hear the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. They began to pray this kind of Christ out of their coasts.

And this is what we've done to our shame. We took this Jesus and asked him to leave America, and then we brought in another form that we created in our own minds. Another Jesus that just gives you more pigs.

Another Jesus that just prospers and loves everybody. There's no cost to walking with him. There's no loss.

There's no faith necessary. Jesus that allows people to be intermixed with uncleanness and suffer no consequence. And now we see the end result of it.

We have a nation that is cutting themselves, a young generation that are cutting themselves with stones. We have a whole society that's confused around us. Evil is now becoming.

We're parading evil now in our cities and calling it good. God, help us. There's only one kind of a church now that's going to make a difference in this generation.

It's people like you and I who just say in our hearts, God Almighty, lead me. Lead me, Lord, to make a difference. Lead me out of where I shouldn't be and lead me into where I should be.

If we would know an awakening in our time, we must decide if we will allow Jesus to be who he is within us. Not who we want him to be, but who he is. Oh, Jesus, cry my heart is come and dwell within the borders of this tabernacle, this tent and consume me from coast to coast.

My mind, my heart, my thinking. I can't do this in my own strength. I won't do this in my own strength.

I will find excuses not to do this in my own strength. But oh God, your word says that you can not only give me the power to do it, but you can give me the will to do it. And so I'm willing to be made willing.

You've got to come and be everything. You've got to be my all and all. You've got to be my heart, my eyes.

You've got to be my vision, my voice. You've got to be the tenderness. You've got to be my compassion.

You have to be everything within me. There was only one man in that whole crowd. Isn't that amazing? There was one man in the whole crowd who didn't want Jesus to leave.

Isn't that amazing? It says when he was come into the ship, verse 18, and he had who had been possessed with the devil, prayed that he might be with him. Please don't leave me. The man who knew that he stood by grace, the man who knew that his freedom was miraculous, the man who knew who he

had been confronted by, the man who knew who had set him free.

Please don't leave me. Please let me go with you. Now you and I would think that Jesus would just say, sure, get in the boat.

There's lots of room, but that's not the way it works. All the Psalmist David said what I prayed just the other day. I would look out my window here in my office, and I just, I'm so sick of the sin in this city.

And I said these words, oh, that I had wings like a dove. I would fly away to be gone from this place. Paul had that in his heart too.

You just get so tired of the sin. You get so sick of the debauchery, so tired of the spiritual ignorance everywhere in our streets. But Paul said, I'd love to go, but it's more expedient for you that I stay.

And so the question is, where do we start? And how do we start? Pastor, I'm hearing you, but where do I start? What do I do? Do I go to the bank and give away my savings? Do I sign up for a missions trip? Just give me a starting point. Well, here's the starting point. This is the man who's gonna make a difference.

Jesus suffered him not to leave with him. In other words, verse 19 says, no, I don't want you coming with me where I'm going now. But go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you and had compassion.

That's where it starts. Go tell your friends and let him lead you from there. It's simple.

Go tell your friends, tell the people you work with, tell the people in your neighborhood, tell the people in your family. Go tell your friends, that's where it starts. Pay the price of rejection.

Pay the price of the snickering. Pay the price. It's a little, it's not much of a price, but it's a start.

Pay the price of misunderstanding of those who are saying you're judging us. Pay the price of those who think you're nuts because of the things you're doing. Pay the price.

Pay the price of the shame, in a sense, of the cross as Jesus did who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame. In other words, put it away, was willing to pay it because of the joy of you and me here today and you and I one day at the throne of God with him for all of eternity. Pay the price.

Pay the price of the misunderstandings. Pay the price. When I first went into ministry, it took my father years to reconcile the fact that I wasn't going to be the next lawyer in our family.

He finally reconciled to the fact that I was a police officer because he saw my career advancing. And when I left that, a career that was lucrative to pastor just a few people in a hotel, he thought I was crazy, told me, he said, don't come to me when you have no money to clothe your children. And when there's no milk in your refrigerator, don't come to me for it, I won't give it to you.

Those were the words of encouragement I got from my father. He's in heaven today, wouldn't mind me telling the truth about that. You got to pay the price of being misunderstood.

Pay the price of people laughing at you. Pay the price of being slandered in the workplace because you stand for God and do what is right. Because freedom will never come if there's not people who are willing

to pay the price.

It's that simple. There's nothing more complicated. Those who are intermixed with the society around them will never, ever, ever, ever influence it.

Society will look and call you acceptable because there's no contrast to it. Go home and tell your friends. And that's my altar call this morning.

It's what the Lord gave me to give you. Go home and tell your friends. You've been quiet long enough.

You know, just do it once in some cases. Maybe it's a boss. I did that with my boss.

And it cost me. So I want to take five minutes and tell you what I believe. And I've asked you to forgive me if you're never doing this before.

But I want to tell you what it is that I believe. Go home and tell your friends. Pay the price of freedom.

Father, I thank you, Lord, for this word today. I thank you, God, for the valleys that you take me through. I thank you, Jesus.

Lord, this word was born in my own anguish. I ask you, Father, God, for grace for all of us, Lord, to not be silent any longer, but to have a willingness in our heart as everyone who's ever been used of God throughout history has had. A willingness simply to pay the price for the freedom of others.

Lord Jesus Christ, I give you the rest of my life. The same way I did in the beginning. I just ask you to give me your Holy Spirit in greater measure than I've ever known.

And strength and vision, Lord, to follow you. Let it be real. Let it be true.

Give us the grace to speak to our friends, our family members, our communities. Give us the grace to pay the price for their freedom, to fight for them. Father, I thank you for this in Jesus' name.

I want to give an altar call this morning for people who need the courage to speak. You just need courage, but God will give it to you if you're willing. The courage to speak.

This is not a time to be silent. This is a time now to speak. You will pay a price, but it's worth it for one soul.

Thank God. In the Education Annex, North Jersey campus, and those that are at home, you could step up to the screens if you will, please. Here in the main sanctuary, if you'd slip out of your seat, just come to the altar in the front of the sanctuary.

If you need courage to speak, it's just courage to tell people about Jesus Christ. I'm not going to leave here a coward. I'm going to leave here with a conviction of God that I would pay the price for the freedom of others.

If you would stand, please, and just make your way here, and after worshiping for a few minutes, we'll pray together. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

God Almighty, your word tells us that perfect love casts out fear. So give us your heart for people, that we would not be afraid of their faces, and we would be willing as you were to pay the price that they may be free. This freedom will not come without a fight.

And today we would ask that we may have the courage as the army of God to fight for a generation that live in darkness. Lord, give us those weapons of our warfare that are your life, God, within us. You are all we will ever need.

As we sing today, Lord, we don't need anything other than your life inside of us. You do all things well. Give us the courage to speak and to not hold our peace.

Father, we thank you, God, for the simplicity of faith, the willingness to do what you call us to do. Lord, we would be used of you in this generation. Although we feel small, we take comfort in knowing that throughout history, you've taken the small things and you've made them large by your strength.

You've fed many with almost nothing. God, help us now. God, help us as a church, Lord, to be alive.

Help us, Lord Jesus Christ, to be compassionate. Help us, God, to have courage. Give us grace to be given.

Don't let us draw back from any cost. Help us. Father, we thank you that our prayers are not in vain.

You hear us today, Lord. You hear the cry of our heart. And you will give us the strength to make a difference, a significant difference in our generation.

Give us wisdom, Lord, when we speak to other people to know exactly what their hearts are thinking and to answer the deep questions of their heart in such a manner that they will know that only the voice of God could have known this. Father, we thank you, Lord, for giftings of the spirit, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, gifts of healing, a compassion so far beyond our own that it could only come from the heart of God. Jesus, be Jesus in us.

Be Jesus through us. And bless this generation that live in darkness because of your life, just the way you did the man in this garden. Bless this generation with freedom.

Father, we thank you for it, God. We give you our lives as a living sacrifice, which is reasonable. It's just reasonable.

And I thank you for it. Give us the grace to do it, God. And we thank you in Jesus' name.

Amen. Praise God.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/XcRr7sxPAKM.mp4>

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