

Reclaiming the Sweetness of the Cross

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes reclaiming the sweetness of the cross through faith, righteousness, and God's unwavering provision in our lives.

Duration: 51:35

Scripture: 1 Samuel 14:24, Psalm 23:1

Topics: "The Cross", "Spiritual Victory"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of reclaiming the sweetness of the cross, highlighting the need for honesty, abandonment to God, and righteousness. It calls for a choice to walk in the victory and strength found in Christ, especially in the face of upcoming challenges. The message urges believers to seek the sweetness of the victory of Jesus, to abandon mixture and dishonesty, and to be led by the Spirit in righteousness and faith.

Transcript

Thank you, Greg. Thank you, choir. It's a very appropriate song, considering that Sister Gwen Wilkerson passed on into glory this week.

And, you know, we were so looking forward to having her here as our guest in October for the 25th anniversary of Times Square Church. She was looking forward to that as well. But I think she'd probably rather be where she is this morning, in October.

Mercifully, she was diagnosed with cancer a couple of weeks ago for the 27th time. And she passed away about 10 days after the diagnosis. Wanted to go home.

And I'm told one of the last things she said, she woke up, she was sedated, she woke up and she said, God has been so good. And that is an amazing testimony to all of us this morning. You know, I don't know if anyone else here has ever had to suffer cancer 27 times and be operated upon.

But she finished with this testimony of the goodness of God. And we thank the Lord for this precious and beloved sister of God, who was a mother of Zion to this church for many, many years. And everyone here that knows her remembered her for her tenderness and her hugs and just the feeling of acceptance to everybody that would ever come into her company was accepted.

And we thank God for that with all of our hearts. I'll be leaving for Texas after the service this morning and be there to be part of the weekend funeral on Monday. And so I'll be sure to bring your love and appreciation and all of your hugs to the Wilkerson family.

So please remember the family in prayer and just be in prayer that God bless and strengthen and keep this family in the days ahead. First Samuel chapter 14, please, if you will. And you might want to find Leviticus chapter 26 as well.

I want to speak to you today about reclaiming the sweetness of the cross. Reclaiming the sweetness of the cross. Now, Father, I thank you, Lord, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit.

For God, without you, we have nothing to say and we have no power to retain what is said. Everything that we are and have comes from your hand. Lord, I thank you that you will touch my heart today in my body.

I thank you, Lord, that you'll give strength to speak this word and you'll give us strength to hear it. Help us, Lord, to change, as the scripture says, from image to image and glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Help us to embrace truth that will set us free.

Give us strength for the days in which we live. And, Father, we thank you for this with all our hearts today. In Jesus' name.

First Samuel chapter 14, beginning at verse 24. This is a scene which I think very much, in my heart at least, represents some of where we are today. And the men of Israel were distressed that day.

For Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eats any food until evening, that I may be avenged on my enemies. So none of the people tasted any food. And all they of the land came to a wood, and there was honey upon the ground.

And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped. But no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard not, when his father charged the people with the oath.

Wherefore, he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straightly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eats any food this day. And the people were faint.

Then said Jonathan, My father has troubled the land. See, I pray you, how my eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. Now the place which God has destined his people to live in has always, always throughout scriptural history been referred to as a place of abundance and rest.

You read it all through the Old Testament and all through the New Testament. We are to be a people sovereignly provided for, sovereignly empowered, sovereignly strengthened, supernaturally touched with the hand of God. We are to be a testimony of God, the reality of God, the sustaining power of God, the healing power of God, the delivering power of God, the keeping power of God.

And the fact that God is. You and I are to be that testimony in the earth. And that is our inheritance, that is your inheritance, and that is my inheritance.

And I don't know about you, but I'm not willing to settle for less than what God has for me. And neither should you be. None of us should fall short of what Christ won for us on Calvary 2,000 years ago.

Listen to what David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, said. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. With Christ at the helm of my life, I have an assurance of provision.

I shall not want. That should be your testimony. God will provide.

You and I, even in the midst of difficulty, like I spoke about with our sister this morning, after so many surgeries and so many diagnoses, so many times of heartache, could finish this journey saying, God has been so good. God gives us sovereign strength. He gives us supernatural strength when we are truly under his governorship, even if we have to go through the flood and go through the fire in this lifetime.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. In other words, in Christ, I have stillness and I have confidence.

I can go through the storms of life. I can go through the difficult seasons that we find ourselves in individually and sometimes as a nation. Verse 3 says, He restores my soul.

He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. He restores me. And he leads me into doing right.

I hope that's your testimony today. I hope everybody who's gathered here can say, I came to Christ and I can honestly tell you he has restored me. He has given back things in my heart, in my mind, in my life, which I had forfeited through ignorance and sin.

Places that I was captivated by. He opened the doors and I was set free. And those things I had lost, he's brought back.

I had lost hope. He gave me hope. I lost faith.

He gave me back faith. I lost courage. He gave me back courage.

I lost vision. He returned vision to my eyes and to my heart. And he's led me away from doing wrong and into doing right.

He leads me in righteousness for his name's sake. Now a lot of people try to have a relationship with God without this being led into righteousness. Or led into right ways of thinking and living and speaking and doing.

And folks, you simply can't have it both ways. You can't have Christ and his redemption and yet not walk in it. You can't claim to have it and not walk in it.

If you are a child of God, the scripture says the old things in you have passed away. You've been given a brand new nature. You've been born again by the spirit of God.

You have another value system now operating inside of you. And as you and I choose to yield to that value system, we change into the person that God destined us to be from even before you and I were formed in our mother's wombs. We live a life that brings honor and glory to God everywhere we go.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. David said in verse 4 of Psalm 23, The place that God has ordained for you and for me to live in is a place of absence of being dominated by fear. Fear has torment.

Christ broke the power of fear when he died. And rose again from the dead. The writer of Hebrews said he delivered those who through all their lifetime were in bondage because of the fear of death.

We're not afraid of death as the people of God. We're not afraid of being provided for. We're not afraid because God has made promises to us and God is going to keep us.

He's going to keep us no matter what happens in the day that we're living in. You can be sure of that. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

He brings a comfort into the heart and into the mind. That no matter where I have to go or what I have to go through, He is going to be with me and his comfort is going to be my comfort. It is a sovereign comfort.

It's a supernatural comfort of God. It can't be seen by the natural eye. As a matter of fact, that's why Peter says, Be ready to give every person an answer who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Because the people who ask don't see any outward reason. Why you should be calm in the midst of such a storm. Why you should be comforted.

Why you should feel no sense of fear or being dominated by fear when everyone around seems to be succumbing to it. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil and my cup runs over.

David said, I have divine provision both unseen and unavailable to the ungodly. I eat at a table that people can't see. That's amazing.

I want you to think about it. They can't see it. You can be sitting on the subway and people around you are fearful and miserable and grumbling and everything else that goes on and you're sitting there and you're eating at a table that nobody around you can see.

The promises of God are literally spread before you. And you're just in your heart saying though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

That's the table. That's not a visible table to anybody who doesn't know God. And then David said, surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

This assurance is that God you've been so good to me and you've been so merciful. You know the longer you walk with God the more you realize it's all been mercy. And it's all been goodness.

We would like to those of us who have walked with God for a long, long time we'd like to roll out our resume. But if the resume was complete and everything was on it you'd just see mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy. All the way through that resume.

Mercy. When God should have written me off. When God should have put me away.

When God should have struck me dumb for the things I was saying or thinking. Mercy. This constant outflow of mercy.

And the longer you walk with God the more merciful hopefully we will become. Because we understand we stand by mercy and by the goodness of God. It will follow us all the days of our lives.

And one day with Pastor David and Sister Gwen we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Now go with me to Leviticus chapter 26 please. If you have that already marked in your Bible.

Because there are some requirements to knowing this full blessing of the Lord. This confidence, the provision, the grace, the goodness, the mercy. This grace, this sweetness of victory as it is, is not available to the casual.

Not available to the half-hearted seeker of God. These things are for those who believe that God is and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. In Leviticus chapter 26 beginning at verse 6. Here is what the Lord says.

Now this is a word to His own people. He said, I will give peace in the land and you shall lie down and none shall make you afraid. And I will rid evil beasts out of the land and neither shall the sword go through your land.

And you shall chase your enemies and they shall fall before you by the sword. Now that's a type of course of the word of God to us. And five of you shall chase a hundred.

And a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight. And your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. And that's a type for you and I of when we know the word of God and believe the word of God.

And when God's promises are found lodging place in our hearts. No matter what comes against us and how powerful it seems. When we speak the word of God to it, it will flee before us.

No matter how long it's been there, no matter how strong it is. And I know this personally. You know my story.

Nine years of panic attacks. And I finally came to panic attacks so severe they put me in the hospital more than one time. And yet I came to Christ.

And I had one promise from the word of God. I was reading where Paul said, if God be for us, who can be against us. I didn't even have the whole verse.

Just part of the verse I remembered. If God be for us, who can be against us. And on the strength of that word, I came down into my living room one evening.

When this kind of fear tried to come on my life again. And I stood and I said, Satan you throw everything you've got at me. And all you can do is kill me.

And you can only do it if God allows you to do it. And if he does, I'm going to heaven. So I went either way.

So I said, you throw at me everything you've got. But I throw back at you what I now have. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I resist you.

And I've told this story many times in this church. And I will tell it for the rest of my life. If you attend this church, you'll probably hear it a hundred more times before I die.

But I'm telling you a white fire, it seemed, hit my feet. Went through my calves, my thighs, through my middle part of my body. And right up to the top of my head.

I was set free in thirty seconds from nine years of hell in my life. And so I understand this scripture, this blessing, this promise of God. He says five of you will chase a hundred.

A hundred of you will put ten thousand to flight. And your enemies will fall before you by the sword, which is the word of God. When you and I have in our hearts to walk righteously.

That means we have it in our hearts to do right, to walk right. To live in a way that honors God. To adopt into our hearts the value system as it is of God.

And the focus of God in the earth, which is the redemption of the lost. That's the only reason Christ came. Didn't come to give us better jobs and bigger houses and nicer cars.

He came to redeem that which was lost. And when you and I move into that work and that will of God. Then suddenly the word of God ignites in our heart.

And the power of God becomes ours. And the truth of God becomes our reality. I will have respect to you.

He says verse nine, I'll make you fruitful. Multiply you and establish my covenant with you. In other words, I'll make you, I'll give you what you need.

And I'll make you more than you are. I'll multiply you. I'll give you strength.

The scripture says those who know him go from strength to strength. I will change you, in other words, and be the source of strength in your life. And you shall eat the old store, verse 10, and bring forth the old because of the new.

In other words, you're not going to have to worry about tomorrow and its provision. The old store is that which you've put together for a difficult day. Let's put it that way.

It's the supply that you put in the pantry. He says you're going to be bringing it out and eating it constantly. Because there's going to be so much coming in.

I'm going to provide for you. And I will set my tabernacle, that's my presence, among you. And my soul will not abhor you.

And I will walk among you and I will be your God and you will be my people. Now we've talked about that over the last few weeks. That the purpose of God in having a people was to glorify his own name in the earth.

My life and your life, the purpose of being here is to glorify God. Is to be a presentation of the heart of God that sent his son to a cross 2,000 years ago. To save us from our sin.

And to give us an assurance of a full life on the earth and eternal life in heaven. Now, if the people of the Old Testament took this relationship with God lightly. Or in some cases, they felt it was too narrow or even distasteful.

Their strength would be lost. And folks, we live in a time much like this. When the way of God got too narrow.

We opened the door in America to preachers who brought a focus. It's not entirely an error, but it is if it's the only focus. That the whole purpose of knowing God was for the betterment of oneself.

For the elevation, to feel good, to be your best you and to be successful. It was all how to do this and how to do that. So we strictly... And there's validity in these truths.

But it's only a part. It's only one spoke in a sense on a whole wheel. And when you take that and make it an exclusive focus.

The people of God lose their vision. They lose their focus. They actually lose the strength of God in many respects.

Look at verse 15. He said, and if you shall despise my statutes. Or if your soul abhor my judgments.

So that you will not do all my commandments. But that you break my covenant. I also will do this unto you.

I will even appoint over you terror. And consumption. And the burning ague.

That shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. You shall sow your seed in vain. For your enemies shall eat it.

In other words, there'll be very little increase. A lot of denominations now in this country are in decline. In other words, you go out and you evangelize in vain.

There's no increase. And your enemies eat everything you sow. And I will set my face against you.

And you shall be slain before your enemies. And they that hate you shall reign over you. And you shall flee when no one is pursuing you.

Now this is the case in our opening text. It was a season in the history of Israel. When a carnal leadership had risen over the people.

And it brought the people of God into spiritual poverty. And dangerous ever deepening powerlessness. Now Saul was a self-focused and a self-led man.

In 1 Samuel chapter 14 verse 19. Now there was a victory being won at this moment. Because Saul's son Jonathan had decided to break from the ranks of this powerlessness.

And this self-focused leadership. And Jonathan in a sense is the type of a man or a person. Just simply comes back to the reality that this victory is won by faith.

This victory is not something we have to do. This victory is something that God chooses to do. And we simply walk in it by faith and by obedience.

With one desire in our heart. And that's to bring honor and glory to the name of God in the earth. That's what knit the heart of Jonathan together with the heart of David.

They were of one heart in this. David had this heart and Jonathan had this heart. And Jonathan broke from this rank that was cowering before the enemies of God.

And he went in and he and his armor bearer took a half acre of land. And in that half acre it sent a shudder through hell. Because a man of faith had come back into the camp again.

The devil does not mind self-interest and self-focus and strategies. These things don't affect his kingdom. But he is afraid of a man or woman or people of God.

One more time laying hold of God through Christ by faith. And say with God all things are possible. That's exactly what Jonathan said.

What are we sitting here for? Why are we cowering under these voices that are taunting us every day? Let's get up. Because God doesn't need an army. He just needs somebody who believes him and is willing to walk through this life for the sole purpose of bringing glory to his name.

That's the one thing that sent a shudder up. It sent a shudder of terror through the ranks of hell. Because the Philistine army were motivated by hell itself.

There were camps of spoilers that had already gone out to cause terror in the surrounding villages. And when Jonathan took that half acre, there was no time for the report to get to them of what had happened. The demonic powers that were inspiring them already knew what was going on.

And the shudder that came in, even to the spoilers, was the direct result of hell one more time. It's the greatest terror of hell is a man or woman of faith. Somebody that just rises up and says, Lord, here I am.

I don't have much, but you take it. And you multiply it. And whatever you choose to do with it, it's yours.

It's like Elise is going back into Burundi. And God, there's a witness in your heart that something bigger than what she thinks is ahead of her. Just simple, ordinary people that say, Lord, I'm just sick of my family.

I'm tired of my city. I'm tired of my nation going to hell in a handbasket. I'm tired of standing on the hillside.

I'm tired of the conferences where we sit and polish our armor and talk about what somebody is going to do someday, somewhere. I've had it with this stuff. I'm getting up and live or die, I'm going to do something in Christ that brings glory to His name.

I'm going to trust Him for the power to do it. Now, Saul saw this victory. He looked down in the valley and he saw everybody scattering and fighting.

And he immediately calls for prayer. He calls for the priest and says, bring the ark and start to pray. But then he was such an impulsive, self-seeking man.

Then he said, no. He said, withdraw your hand. Forget about prayer.

Forget about praying. Forget about dependence and the leading of God. That's the type of ministry that was over the people.

Beware of a prayerless ministry. Beware of a church that has no prayer meetings. Beware of it, folks.

Those that are listening to my voice on the Internet, and will hear it in the future, I'm telling you, beware. If you're in a place where people don't pray, and they don't see the need to pray, and they don't see the need to have a dependence and to follow the leading of the Holy God, you're in a dangerous place. That means you're being led by the minds of men and not by the Spirit of Almighty God.

It is a sure formula to powerlessness. Saul had little concern for the needs of the people, and he saw the people only as vessels to be used for his own vindication and his own success. Verse 24 says, The men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eats any food until the evening, that I may be avenged on my enemies.

So none of the people tasted any food. He had little concern. It shouldn't surprise you that people who preach a gospel of self, where self is at the focus, are concerned only about themselves.

It shouldn't surprise you, because it's the focus of what they preach. They're not going to have a sudden concern for you when they're only preaching about themselves. I don't know why that shocks people.

And when it gets tough for them, they don't stay, they take off, because it's about themselves. The people are just a means to achieving another end. Success and vindication.

In Saul's case, he had been clearly told by the word of God from Samuel that his ministry was deficient, and it was over. And many of these preachers of self, they know the word of God has already declared their ministry to be invalid. But yet they're obsessed with being vindicated.

And obsessed with being successful. And the people under them are strictly a means to that end. That's all it is.

They really don't care if they don't feed the people. They don't care if what they're giving them is straw. As long as they go out and make bricks to build their monument to themselves, they really don't care.

And folks, I think it's time that somebody just says it plainly, so the people can understand it. It's time to get out of these places. It's time to escape it, because we're going into a hard season.

Self-focused leadership led the people to a place where they could see the sweetness of a faith-led victory, but because they were still under another influence, they were unable to partake of it. In verse 26, it was when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped, but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. In one sense, you could say the people were caught between two opinions.

And for some today, the time has come that you must choose which gospel you're going to follow. There are people who sit here in this house and you're hearing one message, and you say, well, I love the gospel at Times Square Church. It's great.

But you have no problem going home, turning on the internet or your television and listening to a completely opposite message. A message of self, a message about how you can be your best you, a message about how you can do this and how you can achieve that. It's almost like you have enough integrity not to go to the corner store and scratch a lottery ticket now, so you turn on the television and play the spiritual lottery.

And you send in your 15 bucks or your 1,500, whatever you can afford, just on the off chance that there really is a hundredfold return on it. It's the same as going to a corner store and scratching a lottery ticket. I think the time has come where you have to choose, choose which gospel you're going to follow.

The days ahead are going to be very, very hard, folks. We are going into a time of difficulty that is unprecedented in our generation. I make no apology for saying that.

And you can feel free to disagree with me now if you like, but you will not disagree with me about two years from now. We are going to need the provision of God. We're going to need that provision which can only be tasted by those who truly belong to Jesus Christ.

The Lord in Deuteronomy told His people, He says, I am willing, as I lead you through the wilderness, I'm willing to give you honey out of the rock. I gave it to you in the wilderness. And God's saying again to His people today, I'm willing to give you that sweetness of victory that doesn't come from anything but the provision of God.

It's not attainable to the casual stranger in the wilderness. This is only available to the people of God. This difficult place, this rock, in a sense, only opens up to those who are truly in their hearts given to following Christ, no matter what it means or no matter where it leads.

In the book of Judges, there was a lion that came upon Samson and the Spirit of God came upon him and he tore it in two. And later on, passing by that lion, there was honey in the midst of that carcass and he reached in and took it and brought it home and fed his family with it. This was a young man at this time, at least, called to be set apart for God.

And because of it, a sovereign strength was upon him. And that which should have killed an ordinary man, he was able to take and with his bare hands, he was able to conquer it. And passing by it, in the days after, he found that honey, that sweet... These things are absolutely not just coincidence.

He found that sweetness of victory. He was able to reach in and take that sweetness of victory out of that which should have had the ability to kill him and take it home and feed his family. And you and I are going to have to find that victory, that strength in Christ.

When fear comes in this society that has the power to kill ordinary people and cause them to lose heart, when men's hearts begin to fail them for fear, God's Spirit will come upon you and give you strength. And passing by that which should take all hope from ordinary men and women of God, you'll be able to reach into that situation and not visible and not attainable to those who are not set apart for God will be a honey, a sweetness as it is, that you can take in your hands, you can touch it to your lips, it brings light to your eyes, and you can take it home and feed your family with a strength that can only be found in God. In Psalm 81, this is what the Lord says to his own people.

Verses 8 to 16. Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee, O Israel, if thou wilt hearken to me. There shall no strange God be in thee, and neither shalt thou worship any strange God.

I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would not listen or would have none of me.

So I gave them up to their own hearts lost, and they walked in their own councils. Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and that Israel had walked in my ways. I should soon have subdued their enemies

and turned my hand against their adversaries.

The haters of the Lord would have submitted themselves unto him. He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock I would have satisfied thee. Now Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 4, they drank, that's the children of Israel, of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.

There's a sweetness in the cross of Jesus Christ that you and I, as Jonathan did, can put to our mouths and receive light to our eyes. There's sweetness in the cross. There was a sweet victory.

There was an incredible, awesome provision in the cross of Jesus Christ. Do you realize that when Jesus Christ said it is finished, the reign of terror, poverty, hell, sickness, disease, everything that had brought such a terror and a hopelessness into the human heart was over. It doesn't mean we don't have to go through these fires.

It doesn't mean we don't have to go through the flood, but the power of these things to overpower us was gone. There was a strength now available, a sovereign strength, a supernatural strength. There was a new life and a new victory, a new heart, a new mind, and a new hope.

In 2 Peter 1, verses 3 and 4, Peter says, According as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that's called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, promises of God. This is the victory, folks. This is the sweetness of the cross for those of us who are engaged in a battle of faith, for those of us who want to see the name of Christ glorified in the earth, for those of us who are concerned with the work of God, which is the redemption of the lost, the helping of those that are suffering, going to those that have no helper, for those of us who are encouraged by these things, there is a honey on the ground in the midst of the battle.

Remember in Saul's day, Jonathan could partake of it because he was a man of faith. But those who were still under the influence of a carnal leadership could look at it but could not partake of it. Their focus was wrong.

That which was over them was leading them into wrong places and to wrong positions of strength. But to those who are focused on Christ, to those who understand what Jesus did on the cross, to those of us who are willing to say, Lord, I abandon my life to you. I give you the rights to my home, my family, my future, everything I am and will be.

I put it into your hands and ask only one thing, that Father, you glorify your name through me. Whether it's on a large scale or a small scale, that really doesn't matter. But God, that you glorify your name by reaching out through my hands and touching, Lord, situations and bringing people out of poverty and bringing them into the understanding of who God is.

Put in my hand a key that opens prison doors and helps the people to get out and find freedom. Give me that anointing flask of oil to pour on the heads of people who have lost heart and lost hope and lost strength and to find the strength that is available to all that God gives freely through Jesus Christ. And oh God, while I'm on this battle and while I'm fighting this fight of faith, when I get weary, Lord, help me one more time to reach down and touch the honey of the promises that you gave to me through the cross.

I don't have to make promises to you, God. You've made promises to me. And you've told me that by these promises, I can escape the corruption of this life and of this body and of this world and I can become a partaker of your divine nature.

God, not my promises to you, but your promises to me. That's the sweetness of the Christian life. That I don't go to the prayer closet making promises to God because my promises are worthless.

I can't keep them. But I go to the prayer closet and in that prayer closet, there is a bowl of honey for me. There is a banquet table of God.

There is a sweetness of that victory that Christ won for me. I don't have to win the victory. The victory was won.

I walk into that prayer closet and say, Lord, around me, there are things that would make me afraid. But, oh God, your word says that you've not given me a spirit of fear, but a power and love and a sound mind. Therefore, I'm not ashamed of the testimony of any of the sufferings of Christ or those who have gone before.

But I will, by the strength of God, be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. I go in that prayer closet in the midst of my struggles and my battles and God, I say I'm weary.

I'm tired. My mind, I can hardly think anymore. I'm reading your Bible and I'm finding it hard to even make sense of it.

But your word says to me that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall walk and not be weary and they shall run and not faint.

Even young men shall utterly faint and fall. But they who wait upon the Lord, they who come into this presence of God, they who sit at this feasting table, they who are engaged in God's work on the earth, they who are concerned for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ in our generation, they who are making only one promise to God. I don't have much and I'm not much but what I have I give to you and ask you to multiply it.

I come into the prayer closet and say, Oh God, my family is not what it should be and the Lord leads me to honey on the ground one more time and says, Look here, Paul said to a Philippian jailer, a dirty old Philippian jailer, You believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your house. If that promise was made to him, that promise is good for you. There's honey on the ground.

Folks, there's honey on the ground. No matter what is on the news, no matter what is happening in your job, no matter what's going on in your neighborhood, there's honey on the ground. No matter what's happening on the subway, no matter what you're having to fight in your mind, there's honey on the ground.

Glory to God. You and I have the privilege of reaching down and we can scoop that up in our hands and touch our lips and just like Jonathan, our eyes are lightened. Strength comes into the heart.

There's honey on the ground. Glory to God. There's honey on the ground.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Even now, as then, we must walk by faith. We must be honest and not be consumed with ourselves, but with the glory and the work of Christ on the earth.

You and I must have the courage to be a partaker of a life that is abandoned to God no matter what the cost. We saw that this morning. It's never a coincidence when things happen in this church to have, typically we send missionaries out at 3 o'clock, but this morning it just happened to be at 10.

We see a life of a young girl going back into what is just a memory of hell. There's nothing else can be said about it. It was hellish, what happened in that country.

And to go back into that takes courage. But there's honey on the ground. For those that are willing to say, Lord, no matter what the cost.

That's what Jonathan said. No matter what the cost, I'm not sitting in powerlessness. I'm not letting the testimony of God be trampled into the earth any longer.

I'm going to let God be God and I'm going to let Him glorify His name through me. And if it cost me my life, it cost me my life. I really don't care, but I'm not sitting here in powerlessness.

I'm not sitting here in compromise and I'm not sitting under a leadership that's leading us into the flesh and into a self-focus because there's no power there. And Jonathan said, no, let them sit here and polish their armor. I'm going into the camp of the enemy and somehow God is going to make a difference to my life.

My little act of faith is going to make a difference. And how He found the sweetness of victory. The sweetness of the cross is available to those of us who are willing to fight this fight to the end.

And that's really the crux of everything God gave me to say today. Go with God. Step out, step out of all mixture.

I'm talking theological mixture and practical mixture. Theological mixture is get rid of the lottery gospel. Turn it off and get away from it.

Just move away from it. And practical mixture is making the choice to do what is right. Remember Israel? They tried to have it both ways.

They tried to have God and some other gods and you can't do it that way. It doesn't work. And many here know exactly what I'm talking about.

You want the assurance of salvation. You want to have some access to the promises of God. But there's some other things that you want as well and God's word clearly says no and you know it.

It's not a debatable issue. You cannot bring it into... All you do is rob yourself of the victory. There's a sweet victory of the cross and if you will not break from the mixture be it pornography, thievery, you're living with someone, you're not married, you know it's not right.

Stop trying to make evil good. You can't do it and have the promises of God at the same time. There are many things.

Those are just a few. But you know what it is. And if you want to taste the sweetness of the cross and you're not going... I'm telling you folks, you're not going to make it without it.

You and I have no idea how difficult these days are going to be ahead of us. But I'm telling you they're going to be very difficult. More so than we're prepared for at this moment.

I have a strong sense in my heart. This church was established 25 years ago to mourn this city of coming judgment and to gather a remnant. And Pastor David before his death asked me, he said, Carter, don't ever forget that.

The purpose that God planted this church was to warn of the coming judgment and to gather a remnant out of the city. And by God's grace we're going to continue to do that until it can't be done anymore. We're going to move ahead.

We're going to be praying and fasting as a church in September. Our service on Tuesday night after the fast is going to become more of a prayer service. We're going to be pressing through like we never have.

I'm asking this church to fast every Tuesday starting on September the 18th. Every Tuesday will be a fast day. The doors will open here at 5.30. There will be teams of people here to anoint and pray with those who are just having a hard time to make it through.

And you need somebody to pray for you. We're going to worship at 7. And we'll start to pray as the Holy Spirit leads us. But we're going to pray and we're going to believe God for this city.

We're going to be partnering together with up to 100 inner city churches. We're going to be underwriting feeding programs in these churches. We're going to be gathering and praying together.

We're moving in what I believe is the inheritance of God and the plan of God. As much as we know it and He reveals it. But folks, to experience this, to know this, we have to be walking in honesty.

The sweetness of the cross is not available to the dishonest. It has to be honesty. There's just simply got to be something in the heart that says this is right and I'm going to do what's right.

And if you are willing to be abandoned to Christ, no matter what the cost, then the sweetness of the cross will become yours. It will be a sweet fellowship. There will be courage and strength to face these days.

But you have to make the choice. And I want to give an over call and it's just this simple. I want the sweetness of the victory of Jesus to be mine.

And everything it means to me, I want the sweetness of that victory, the victory that Jesus Christ won for me, I want to be able to partake of that honey in my life and my journey in the days ahead. In Jesus' name. Let's stand, please, if you will.

And for those in the annex, you could step between the screens in the main sanctuary. If you'd like to respond and come forward to the front of this auditorium, that would be wonderful. We'll pray together.

You simply want this abandonment to God. Now, if you already are, that's no problem. You don't have to come down here.

But for those who do want this abandonment, I want to encourage you to come. And especially for those who need to get right with God. You're here.

You've attended church or churches, but you're really not committed to righteous living. Please, please, I plead with you. If you can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, don't harden your heart today.

Don't push away the conviction of God. Get right with God today. Put away what should be put away.

And lay hold of strength and truth that Christ gives. Would you just lift your hands to the Lord? Lord, you said that where your spirit is, the treasure of Christ is open to those who know they need strength. Prison doors open, blinded eyes see.

Out of poverty, Lord, we're made strong. Lord, this is your army. These are your people in New York City.

And beyond, Lord. And I'm asking you today, God, for a supernatural hunger for righteousness. A desire, Lord, that you plant in the heart to do good and to walk righteously.

David said, he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Help us, Lord, to be led by you. Out of where we shouldn't be and into where we should.

I ask you, Lord, today for these whose hands are raised to take us as you did Jonathan and his armor bearer and put your spirit upon us and give us power to make a difference. Let it be so evident it's the spirit of God that none of us could boast. No one could ever say, look what I have done.

We would all know it's the hand of God. And, Father, we thank you, Lord, that the scripture tells us in the last days, in the days of Daniel, spoke about that those who know their God shall be strong and do exploits. Exploits being things that cannot be done in the natural.

It can only be done by God. And, Father, thank you, Lord. This is who we are.

And you've never taken anyone because they're smart and themselves are strong. You take us because we're weak. You take us because we simply raise our hands and say, Lord, here I am.

Use me for your glory. Take me in my frailty and my weakness and give me the strength to be what I need to be. And, Lord, glorify your name.

And, Father, I thank you for this today. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ. That's what you're going to do in this age, this remnant church in New York City.

And, Father, we thank you for the hundreds of other churches that will gather together to pray and to believe you, God, and to open their doors to receive the people in this day that we're living in. Thank you, Lord, for the grace to play our part that you've given us and to do it right and to do it righteously. Thank you, Lord, for the grace to walk humbly before you, God, knowing that without you, none of us have any strength, none of us have any freedom, none of us have anything to offer.

It all comes from your hand. And so we just bring it back to you and say, Father, glorify your name. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

I thank you for these brothers and sisters. I thank you for the marvelous reports that will one day be in heaven. Even if we don't hear them on earth, we'll hear them in heaven.

Where somebody said, I went to an altar, I raised my hands, and the Spirit of God came upon me. And you have to hear what God did in my life from that day forward. I went into the battle, and there was honey on the ground that I saw that others couldn't partake of, but I could reach down, and I could touch it to my lips, and it brought light into my eyes.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Lord, we thank you, God. Lord, put honey all over the ground in New York City.

Everywhere we travel, where we have to go, Lord, feed us, O God, with the victory of the cross. Give us strength, O God. Give us vision in our eyes, and may we not be of people who walk by what we naturally see, but what you show us, O God, and what you speak to our hearts, and what you whisper in our ear.

Father, we thank you for this. God Almighty. Out of weakness, they were made strong.

That's what Hebrews says you do. Out of weakness, they were made strong. I speak this in the name of Jesus.

Out of weakness, they were made strong by the grace of Almighty God in the name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Thank you, God.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Never say never.

Never say no to God. What He asks you to do, do it. He will take you out of your comfort zone constantly.

Obey Him, and watch what God will do through your life. It's going to be an amazing journey. Don't turn back.

Don't settle for second best. Keep going. Live a life that brings honor to God.

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