

Set Free From the Power of Serpents

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the need for believers to be set free from the poisonous influence of serpents, representing evil and temptation, through trust in God and the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Duration: 53:44

Scripture: Numbers 21:1, 1 Corinthians 10:9

Topics: "Freedom"

Description

In this sermon titled 'Set Free from the Power of Serpents,' the preacher emphasizes the need for individuals to seek freedom from the influence of sin and the enemy. He encourages young people to trust in God's ways, even when they may not understand them. The preacher warns about the dangers of evil speakers and the rising up of workers of iniquity. He emphasizes the importance of trusting in God and His plan for our lives, even in the midst of storms and challenges. The sermon is based on 1 Corinthians 10 and includes references to Psalm 64.

Transcript

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First Corinthians, Chapter 10. My message title this morning is, Set Free from the Power of Serpents. Set free from the power of serpents.

Father, I stand before you this morning dependent on you. And I thank God for that position. Thank you, Lord, that you have made me dependent.

Jesus, I thank you that you've never failed me. You will never fail anyone who stands with a heart of trust in you. Lord, I trust that you've given this message this day for this congregation for a purpose.

I trust that the purpose will be realized. I ask you, God, in Christ's name, to animate me, Holy Spirit. My very heart, the very intonations of my voice.

I ask you, God, for the grace to stand behind the cross. And Jesus, to allow you and you alone to be heard and seen. Lord, destroy the power of the enemy.

Every inroad that he's making into any life that is gathered here in this house or will hear this message in the coming days. I ask you, Lord, to destroy the power of the enemy. And Father, I thank you, God, that you will be faithful in Jesus' name.

1 Corinthians 10, beginning at verse 9. Now, Paul is exhorting the Christian church of that time to beware of some things. And he says in verse 9, Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents. And neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Now, all these things happened to them for examples. And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall.

There has no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able. But will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Now, I want to focus just for a moment on verse 9, then we'll eventually go through the rest of this passage. But verse 9 says, Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents. Now, the first mention of the serpent in the Bible is a reference to the devil himself.

You remember the story in Genesis chapter 3, verses 4 to 6, where the devil came and tempted Eve. And basically, the paraphrase is mine, but I'm going to paraphrase it out of my own words, from Genesis chapter 3. Essentially, as I see it, he told Eve these particular words. He said, you shall not surely die.

God has told you that you are not to touch this particular fruit, as it is in the garden. But he said, if you touch it, you will not die. You see, God is withholding from you.

This is the temptation of the serpent, to try to get the children of God at this particular time. And of course, the temptation never changes. To believe that if there are some things that you cannot touch, it's simply God being mean to you.

He's withholding from you. And then the enemy goes on to say, the experience of knowing evil as well as good is only proof that you've grown in wisdom. See, God's trying to withhold this knowledge of evil from you.

But when you have this knowledge of evil, Satan said to Eve, you'll become just as God's, to know good and evil. And God is withholding this good thing as it is an evil thing. But the devil is trying to propose that it's something good that God is keeping away from your life.

And then, of course, becoming as God, you may freely speak and act without experiencing any defilement of character or conscience. You will not die. Nothing will happen to you.

That's the devil's line right from the beginning, right from the Garden of Eden. Go ahead, touch this, taste this, handle this. There'll be no problem.

God is withholding it from you, knowing that if you partake of it, you're just going to get wiser. And it's going to be a good thing. And of course, we know what happened.

He succeeded in tempting Eve and subsequently her husband Adam. They partook of what God had forbidden them to touch. And this first bite, I want to liken it to the first bite of a serpent.

Now, the devil is referred to as a serpent for a very good reason. We'll be talking about that as we get deeper into this message. But the first bite of the serpent infused a poisonous nature into fallen man.

Because of this first bite, you and I were born with a poisonous nature. Man now had an uncontrollable tongue to match a nature that would try to derive its meaning and its existence apart from God. An uncontrollable tongue.

Is there anybody here that can say, before you came to Christ, I had control over my tongue? Is there any who can say, in Christ, thank God, I'm experiencing the victory, line by line, step by step, little by little. But we have to agree with the Word of God, where James says in James 3.6, I'm going to read it to you from the New Living Translation. The tongue is a flame of fire.

It is full of wickedness that can ruin your whole life. It can turn the entire course of your life into a blazing flame of destruction, for it is set on fire by hell itself. You see, the moment that life as it is of that poison of the devil was infused into the human race, every man then was born with that same nature.

That nature that wants to challenge God at every turn. That nature that wants to accuse God, wants to say, God, somehow, you are withholding some good thing from me. I came to you thinking that it was going to be this kind of a relationship, but I find hardship, I find difficulty, I find misunderstanding.

I thought what was supposed to be a Garden of Eden is now, it's a barren place, the place that you've called me to walk in. And this tongue, when it's not controlled by the spirit of God, can be the very instrument of evil, not only poisoning the whole being and setting on fire that inward part of man, but also beginning to poison others all around it. Psalm 58, if you want to go there very quickly with me.

Psalm 58 verses 3 to 5 tells us very clearly that we are born with this uncontrollable tongue. We're born with this uncontrollable nature. Psalm 58 verse 3 says, the wicked are estranged from the womb.

They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Beloved, if you're here without God, you didn't learn to lie. Nobody taught you that.

It was in your nature when you were born. The moment you were able to speak, or you remember when you were a child and your mother and father or guardian would come and say, did you touch that? You'd say no, even though you knew you did. Nobody had to teach you to do that.

It was in your nature to lie. You were born because that bite of the serpent was in your character now. As soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. Now, this is rather difficult or you'd say rather severe talk, but this is the Holy Spirit inspiring David. He's talking to David about human nature, talking about babies.

We look at them and say, oh, aren't they cute and don't they have nice eyes? Isn't that pretty ears and nice hair and all the rest of this stuff? But David looks at children and says, no, they're wicked from the womb. As soon as they speak, they're going to lie to you. They have poison on their lips like the poison of a serpent.

They're like the deaf snake, as it is, that stops its ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers charming ever so wisely. In other words, there's something in man that wants to shout out the voice of correction. There's something in fallen man that does not want to hear the voice of God.

Yes, of course, we want God, but on our own terms. And I believe that's the peril of many throughout all history from the time of Calvary. Come and say, Lord, we want you, but I want you on my terms.

I want you as I think God should be, not as you have revealed yourself, but as I think you are. And if I don't find you that way, then you're going to suffer. I mean, it's ludicrous to think of it, but there are people today who say, well, I look for God.

I didn't find him the way I thought he was going to reveal himself to me. And so now they begin to speak actually even against God. They speak against God's people.

They speak against God's house. And that Adamic nature, that fallen nature now begins to dominate and have control of them. Poison that was part of them right from the womb now emanating from their lips.

That same bite that bit even Adam in the garden is now emanating from the children of even Adam, who have not been born again and are not under the control of the Spirit of Almighty God. In Psalm chapter 12, verse 4, David identifies this infusion of godlessness with a heart that says our lips are our own. David said, they said, who is Lord over us? Our lips are our own.

Look at society today. Look at television. If you're hopefully you're not watching it, but if you do happen to from time to time, you begin to hear a talk radio, all these other things.

We live in a whole society now that says our lips are our own. The freedom of speech is a wonderful thing, but unfortunately, it's become a freedom from all restraint of speech. All restraint.

People are now free to speak any kind of abominable, disgusting filth that they want to speak in the name of freedom. All standing and saying, who is Lord over us? Who is Lord over our lips? We are free to speak anything we want to speak. And it's appalling.

I said to somebody yesterday that I can't even imagine what this society is going to be like in 20 years from now. If Christ does not intervene, they're pushing the envelope. And I have little doubt that it's going to be no different than Sodom and Gomorrah.

We're right on the edge now. They're pushing the envelope in every every aspect of the media, music that young people are listening to. Do we somehow think that we're going to have these things among us and not reap a horrible judgment because of it? Oh, there's a whole society now that is really thumbing their nose at God and saying, who is Lord over us? Who's Lord over our speech and who's Lord? Our lips are our own.

They belong to us. We're free to say anything we want. And churches now ordaining homosexuals that once perhaps knew the gospel.

Phenomenal what's beginning to happen. You see the downward spiral very, very rapidly happening in all of the known world, knowing, beloved, that it's going to end up in a time of incredible turmoil for the whole world. It's going to come suddenly.

The scripture says suddenly there's going to be fearfulness grip the heart of man. But if you are walking in righteousness, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you are among those who can say, God, I may not understand, but I trust. I believe you, God.

I believe, Lord, that you have a plan for my life. I believe that this life is just a vapor. I believe that you're taking me in to eternity for an eternal purpose.

I believe that the things I understand and don't understand are all working together. That eternal purpose that you have for my life. God, I trust you with everything that's within me.

It's that heart that's going to be able to stand in the coming days. In the midst of the storm, there are going to be a people who can stand and say, I've learned to trust God. Beloved, it's hard to learn in the middle of the storm.

You have to learn before the storm comes to trust God. The heart of fallen man, when fallen man's heart is not touched by the Holy Spirit, it moves now from simple obedience to God to imagining mischief. There's no, you see, just as much as there's no end to the glory and the life of God in an obedient soul, there's no end to the delusion.

There's no end to the crookedness that comes into a heart that is not yielded to Jesus Christ. And under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Psalm 140, verse 1. Now, David is speaking as a type of a man who is pursuing God. And he cries from deliverance from those that he describes as evil and violent all around him.

David is saying, oh God, don't let me be touched by this spirit. Don't let the poison of this generation begin to find a lodging place in my life. God, you've set me apart for a purpose.

David knew he had been called to reign as a king. Perhaps there's a deep understanding in his heart that, oh God, you have destined to have a people on this earth. And Lord, he knew he had been used to, or was going to be used to bring the Ark of the Covenant, this type of God dwelling right in the midst of a people who have learned to appreciate him as God.

And David knew it. And David understood that, oh God, if I am infused by this poison, if I let it get into my system, this poison of the devil, then I'm not going to become the man that you intended me to be. He cries out in Psalm 140, verse 1. Deliver me, oh Lord, from the evil man.

Preserve me from the violent man. Preserve me. Oh, David cries, God, don't let this spirit get in me.

Which imagine mischiefs in their heart. Continually are they gathered together for war. They've sharpened their tongues like a serpent.

It's amazing. You'll find that thread all through the scriptures. When you find words being used in a context to poison or destroy, you'll always find the reference to the serpent.

Adder's poison is under their lips. You see, David is saying, there's people around me, and they're trying to get to me with evil words. They're trying to get something that you've planted in me.

They're trying to infuse me with poison to take away the life that you've given me. And David's saying, deliver me, God. Deliver me.

We've spoken about this before when even David found himself in the cave of Adulam. And all these men came around him. They were in distress and in debt and discontent.

And they gathered around him in that cave. Do you not think for a moment that you think they walked in and started praising God? I don't believe it for one second. I think they came in the cave and they started spouting the deepest, vilest venom.

They started speaking about vengeance. They started accusing everything and everybody around them for their personal problems they were experiencing. And David is crying out, Oh, God, deliver me from this violence that's around me.

Don't let this spirit get a hold of me. Keep me, oh God, from the hands of the wicked. Preserve me from the violent man who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

The proud have hit a snare for me in cords and they've spread a net by the wayside. And they've set jinns for me. The jinns means like sudden springing traps.

They've set traps to catch me suddenly. And David says, oh God, don't let this spirit get a hold of me. This spirit of the enemy that causes me to imagine mischiefs.

That causes my mind to be running away with all kinds of inferences and suggestions that are not of God. There's no foundation in truth. Don't let this get a hold of my mind.

Don't let this become part of my character. Psalm 64 verses 1 to 6. David says it this way. He says they suddenly, they suddenly shoot bitter words at those that God has justified.

Suddenly and without fear. You ever had that happen to you? I've had it happen to me. Walking seemingly in unity with a fellow Christian.

I expected from the wicked. It's no surprise when the wicked man just turns, points his finger and just tries to blast you with the poison of the devil. No surprise.

Where it is a surprise quite often is when a Christian person you're walking with. They let this poison get into their system. And it's causing their mind to run away with all kinds of lies.

And then all of a sudden they turn. You're walking with God. You're loving God.

As best as you know, you're serving Him. You're in right relationship. As Paul says, as much as you're able, you're in right relationship with God and your fellow man.

All of a sudden you have somebody turn and just absolutely blast you right out of hell itself. You can see the mouth of the serpent opening to virtually swallow you. And David says, hear my voice, Psalm 64.

Oh God, in my prayer and preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked. From the insurrection or the rising up of the workers of iniquity.

Who wet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words. That they may shoot in secret at the perfect. Suddenly do they shoot at Him and they fear not.

The word perfect means those that God is perfecting. They shoot firstly in secret. They find somebody else who's in tune with this poisonous report.

This mischief that they've imagined in their heart. And they say, well, I've noticed something. And they begin to share it with another person.

The other person bites into it. And before you know it, there's a crowd gathered around the lie. That's all it is.

It's just a lie. But a crowd is gathered around it. And then all of a sudden, fear leaves their heart.

They're all deluded and they believe they've got a cause. And they rise up. You see, folks, that's what church rebellions are all about.

It's a work of evil. It's the bite of the serpent gets a hold of people. It begins to spread like a poison.

And everyone who has that same spirit finally gets together. And all of a sudden, you can have a righteous man or woman standing in that pulpit, preaching right from the very throne of God. And all of a sudden, without fear, they've communed in an evil matter.

And suddenly, they get up and they begin to shoot at the righteous men of God. If you're a visiting preacher today going through a split in your church, it should not be a surprise to you. If you have preached the gospel, there are going to be people under your ministry that have refused the truth of Christ.

They have been given every opportunity to hear. They have not heard. They are living in willful rebellion to God.

The bite of the serpent has found a place, a mark in their spirit. They are going to seek out people just like themselves. They're going to gather in a little group.

They're going to suddenly stand up and accuse the man of God. Or the woman of God. You cannot get away from it.

Oftentimes, beloved, a church split can be a sign that God's health is in that body. God is working in that body. A cancerous growth has come somewhere among those people.

And the Lord says, I've got to let it grow. I've got to let it form until all of those evil hearts really have come together. And then I'm going to cut it off.

I'm going to take it out of my body. Hallelujah. I don't know why I'm sharing this today in this context.

I think for some it's just a warning for the days ahead. We never know what the enemy has planned or is going to try to bring against the work of God. I think some of you are aware of what I'm talking about now.

You've got a snake that has been sitting beside you for a while now. Hallelujah. Suddenly and without fear.

Suddenly. You think you've found somebody that loves God and then suddenly. You see, a snake strikes suddenly.

If you look at just the characteristic of a snake, it can look fairly harmless. It's all coiled up. It can even look like it's, you know, snakes.

I've seen before people play music and they can even sway with the music. It's amazing. But they're a snake.

There may be a few even here today just sitting in your seat all coiled up and just going with the flow. Service is over. All the call has happened.

You're standing. And then all of a sudden, suddenly. Suddenly there's a bite.

A word. Something spoken. A poison injected into your system.

Just a word sometimes about a spiritual leader or somebody in the church or another person. And the poison is now in your system. And you want to know how it's in your system because you cannot view that person the same anymore.

Every time you see that person, that bite that you receive comes back. And if it's never dealt with, then it starts to form these mischiefs. These imagined mischiefs.

And that's exactly what the poison will do once it gets into your system. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 23, he called the scribes and Pharisees serpents. He said, you're a generation of vipers.

Now, here are the religious leaders of the people. And he says, you are serpents. You've got the spirit of the serpent in you.

You've got the spirit of vipers. He told them, he says, you're going to fill up the measure of your fathers. He said, your fathers murdered the prophets.

And you say, if we had been in their day, we wouldn't have been partakers with our fathers. And he said, by your very testimony, you are making a declaration that you are the children of those who murdered the prophets. And he said, now fill up the measure of your fathers.

In other words, your fathers spoke against those who suddenly rose up and spoke against those who were speaking for God. But you're going to now rise up against God Almighty himself. Fill up the measure, he said.

You see, that's where it actually can get to. Evil speaking can get to the point where you're speaking against God. You can be teaching a Bible study, but speaking against God.

Now, Numbers chapter 21, please. You see, 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 9 is referring to Numbers chapter 21. And in Numbers chapter 21, beginning at verse 1, Scripture says, And when King Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.

And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, If thou will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. And he called the name of the place Hormath.

Now, you see, they've just come off an incredible victory. They've lost some people. They've been captivated by the enemy.

They have prayed. And even in their deficiency, God has become their strength. And they've won incredible victories.

Now, look what happens right after the victory. And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to encompass the land of Edom. And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

Beloved, listen to me very carefully. Beware of the times of discouragement that can come after a mighty victory. And beware what you say.

Be careful what you say in these times of discouragement. Discouragement comes to my heart from time to time. It comes to your heart.

There are certain valleys that we have to walk through. There are certain times that all we have are the promises of God. There's nothing around us that makes us happy.

Everything around us seems to be going wrong. But the one thing that we do have are God's promises. And God will always be faithful to His promises.

But be careful how you speak during times of discouragement. This gets a lot of people into difficulty. They were discouraged because of the way.

Perhaps they thought it was going to be victory, victory, victory all the time. They just come from conquering this enemy and now all of a sudden it seems like their enemies are, at least spiritually speaking, are all around them. And they're discouraged because of the way.

It's a hard time. And every one of us go through hard times. Some of them we can't even explain.

We don't even know why. You ever been in a hard time and somebody asks you what's wrong? And they keep asking you what's wrong and you don't know what's wrong. You'd like to be able to say something.

Sometimes you get to the point of just saying anything. So they stop asking you what's wrong because you really don't know what's wrong. You're just going through this time of difficulty.

And it comes to every one of us. It can be physical. It can be spiritual.

It can be just the circumstance. It can be the weather. And you go into this time of discouragement.

But here's where the people made a grievous mistake. And it says, and the people spake against God and against Moses. Wherefore, they said, have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There's no bread.

There's no water. And our soul loathes this light bread. Amazing.

They said, they began to speak in their discouraged time. And they're actually speaking against God. And they said, yeah, such promises.

I tried this. It's like the new believer that is so filled with excitement about coming to Christ. And then there's a time when that excitement has to move into maturity.

When young couples who are in love get married, they are just so enamored with one another. It doesn't matter where they go for their honeymoon. They don't even care about their surroundings.

But then there's a time after where maturity has to come into that relationship. And there has to be an interpersonal dealing one with another. There's got to be a reckoning of some character traits that have got to change.

And circumstance and such like become a little more important than they were in the beginning. And many, many new believers fail to understand this. That there are times where God will take you into seasons of discouragement to refine your character.

To do something to build a trust into you that can only come. Oh, everybody can trust God when they're living on the mountaintop. When you have no enemies fighting against you.

When grapes are falling out of heaven as it is. The songs are flowing. There's just this wonderful... But then you've got to go down into the valley from time to time.

And that's where character is built, beloved. And God was doing this with His people. But in this time of discouragement, they began to accuse God.

That's an incredible difficult thing that they did. And against Moses. And they said, you brought us up to die in this wilderness.

I thought this was going to be a victory march. I thought we're going into a land of promise. And here we are in a desert.

We don't find bread, we don't find water. And we hate this thing that God is giving us every day to keep us alive. And it can actually get that way.

Where you actually begin to despise the word of God. Oh God, yeah, right, I've heard that. When is it going to work for me? Yeah, right.

Quote me another promise. When is it going to work? Like, I don't see any bread. I don't see any water.

I don't see this land of great provision. And I'm starting to hate this bread that falls from heaven every day to sustain me. I don't even want to open my Bible anymore.

Young Christians get like that. Older Christians get like that. The moment hardship comes, they close their Bible and say, God, I don't even want to open this book anymore.

You're not speaking to me, I'm not speaking to you. And the scripture says, The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and many of the people of Israel died. You see, poisons work in different ways.

Some poison, I'm talking about now venomous poisons from snakes. Some poisons cause complete paralysis. I saw a documentary one time on various snake bites and what they do to people and how they work.

It's very terrifying when you begin to see how venom really works, how it begins to move through the system and systematically begins to shut down the life. It can take weeks, but it systematically begins to

shut down the life within that body. If it's not treated, if the antidote is not given to it, it will ultimately cause the person in most cases to die.

And some cause complete paralysis. And I think of those who have been bitten by the enemy in the house of God who are unable to move now with the church body. The church is moving forward, but they've received a poison from the enemy.

And I don't want to be specific about it, because it can be many different types of poison that have gotten into your system, but now the church is moving, you can't move with it. Incredible. Sitting in the house of God and there's this deep sense that we're on a journey, we're moving somewhere as a body.

There's an excitement among the people, but you're sitting here paralyzed, unable to move with it. There's such a distrust of God. There's a distrust of leadership.

There's a distrust of God's word. The enemy has planted that poison within your heart and you cannot move now with the church body. Some poisons take away breath.

They begin to paralyze the lung system and the heart. And I think of the growing Christian who initially has the breath of God. You see, that's how we live, by the breath of God.

We live by the spirit of God breathing life into us. And that poison begins to squeeze out the very breath of God within that person. And others cause tissues around the bitten area to slowly die.

I saw in this particular documentary a man who was bit by a rattlesnake and was left out in the wilderness for several days. And slowly his hand and arm began to die. Gangrene began to set in and his arm swelled to about three times its normal size.

By the time he was discovered, he was delirious. His arm was paralyzed and he was in danger of death because, of course, the gangrene starts to spread through the whole body. And I think of the man whose hand is withdrawn from the work of the church because of the poison in his system.

He's been bitten by a snake. The venom of the devil has gotten into him, into his mind, his heart, his thoughts. He used to be active in the church and had a sense of mission and purpose in the body of Christ, but now is withdrawing his hand.

Yes, he attends, but his hand is withdrawn. The ministry that God gave him is paralyzed because there's been something of the devil that's been infused in him. Now imagine this, if you will, with me in the camp of Israel.

Imagine people coming out of their tents in the morning and some are paralyzed, many are paralyzed, others can hardly breathe anymore. And you see others beginning to die slowly all around. And the Bible says that all these things happen to them for examples and they're written for us, for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

This is in the church, beloved, I've seen churches like this. I used to travel as a revivalist before coming to New York and I've seen churches that have been bitten by the serpent and people are dying all over. They've withdrawn their hand from the work of God.

There's no breath, there's no young people in the church anymore. There's nothing to offer, just poison. A whole pretense of loving God, but it's poison.

Poison has infused the whole congregation. I was in one church one time and I was halfway through my message and just closed the Bible and stopped. They said there's no point in even preaching to you.

You don't even want the truth. The truth is long gone from this house. Now it's a very difficult thing to say, but it was the truth.

There was some poison, it was infused. The whole church was steeped in bitterness. And it was so tragic as you see death and decay all around because the enemy had come in and accusations now were the order of the day.

Accusations against the leaders. Accusations against one another. Accusations against the very word of God that was being preached to them.

And ultimately accusations against God Almighty Himself. The scripture tells us in Numbers 21.7, the people came to Moses and said, we've sinned for we've spoken against the Lord and against thee. He said, pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us.

And Moses prayed for the people. We've sinned. Beloved, if you have been poisoned and you can at least say I've sinned against God, there's still hope of life.

There are some people even sitting in this house and it's sad to say who have been poisoned to the extent that barring a miracle of God, there is little or no hope. We have people who sit in this sanctuary, been here for years and write the most vulgar, disgusting letters to the leadership of this church. I'll get letters about this message.

They will think that I've singled them out to preach this message and I've not. And they will write because they can't hear anymore. They're absolutely dead, as the scripture says, plucked up by the roots.

They need a miracle of God to be able to hear the word of God again. And finally, they said, Moses, we've sinned against God. The evidence of this sin is the death that is working in our midst.

It's those that are losing hope. It's those that are withdrawing their hand. It's those that are not able to move with the church body anymore.

There's an evidence, God, that something is wrong. We're speaking things we shouldn't speak about God. We're speaking about leaders in a way we shouldn't be speaking.

And because of it, people around us are beginning to die. The young are losing their hope. Those that were once walking with God are withdrawing their hand.

They're standing back. They're unsure now, because the poison of the devil himself has gotten into their spirit. Isaiah said, The sinners in Zion are afraid, and fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites.

Who among us, they say, shall dwell with the devouring fire? And who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Now, what is the fire that Isaiah is talking about? Fearfulness has surprised them. They're beginning to understand in Isaiah's day that an enemy was coming upon them. Verse 11 in Isaiah 33, God says to Isaiah, Your breath as a fire shall devour you.

Your breath shall devour you. In other words, you're being devoured by your own testimony. Your own words that you're speaking before God are devouring you.

I've seen life devoured from the house of God. And I preach this message only out of a passionate heart. Only out of a burdened heart.

The Times Square church not go the way of past places. Not go the way the children of Israel went in the desert. Should not go the way of multitudes of churches that have been called by the name of Christ, but have been devoured by the fire, the uncontrolled fire of their own tongues.

We need the power of the Holy Ghost to control what we say. We need the power of the Holy Ghost to subdue our hearts. Who then? They cried out to Isaiah and they said, Who can live? Who will live? And in verse 15 Isaiah says, He begins this entire verse, but it begins with something very specific.

He says, He that walks righteously and speaks uprightly. Here's the man who will live. There are a few other things, but this was the beginning.

The man who walks right before God. The man who makes the choice to speak what is right in the Word of God. He makes a choice.

It doesn't matter how I feel. I know what God says and that's my testimony. He, Isaiah said, shall dwell on high.

His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks. The other translations say, He will be given a mighty fortress in the mountains. An impenetrable place where the devil cannot get a hold of him or his family.

He'll be given that place to live. Bread will be given him and his waters shall be sure. He will be given food and sustenance from God Almighty.

He'll be protected by God. There'll be a river of life that comes into him and a river of life that goes out of him because he has made the choice to cry out to God and say, Holy Spirit, subdue my heart. Holy Spirit, subdue this damnable nature, this fallen nature that would destroy the work of God, that would destroy the people of God.

Oh God, help me, help me, help me by the power of the Holy Ghost. And after they had cried out to God, the Lord said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole and it shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

You see, once the serpent has bitten you, it's too late. There's nothing humanly possible that you can do to get it out of your system. Once your mind or spirit has been poisoned against even God Himself or the people of God, there's very little, if anything, that you can do to get that poison out of your system.

And so a very peculiar thing is done. God gives Moses the instruction to put a serpent, an image of that serpent that was causing all of this distress to the people of God, put it up on a pole and raise it up. And when a man is bitten and he knows he's dying, his only defense, as it is, his only recourse to health was to come and look upon that serpent on that pole and if he would do that, then he would be healed.

Now, Jesus said in John chapter 3, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not

perish but have everlasting life. You see, when Christ was lifted up, it was a type in the Old Testament.

When Christ was lifted up, He destroyed the power of the devil. He destroyed the devil's power to poison and maim and cripple and bruise the people of God. He destroyed his power! He destroyed it! The Scripture says He took captivity captive.

He displayed the powerlessness of the enemy. He was lifted up. And when He was lifted up, He triumphed over the power of the devil and gave gifts unto men.

If you have been bitten by the power of the enemy, if the enemy is causing you to accuse even the faithfulness of God, the only recourse is look to Christ now. Look to Him. Look to Christ with all of your heart.

Because He triumphed over the power of the devil. He triumphed. Luke 10, 19, He said, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

I give you power means you do not have to be in bondage to the lies of the devil anymore. Mark chapter 16 and verse 18. The Scripture says, Jesus said, Here are the signs that follow those that believe, and one of those is they shall take up serpents.

In other words, serpents will no longer take them up. They will take up serpents. They'll be able to pick up every snake that wants to bite them and look the enemy right in the eye.

And say, devil, you will not defile me with your report. You will not make an evil speaker out of me. You will not hinder the life of Christ in me.

Look Him in the eye in Jesus' name and say, You will not. You will not poison me. You'll not have me.

You'll not have my family. You'll not have my ministry. You'll not have my mind.

You'll not have my spirit. You have no place in me. You have no place in me.

Get out of my life. Paul says, Consider these things. Those of us upon whom the ends of the world have caught me say, There is no temptation taking you, but such as is common to man.

In other words, every man has to struggle with this who has ever been born. But God is faithful. And He will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able.

But with the temptation will make a way to escape that you might be able to bear it. The way to escape is Christ. There is no other way.

The power, the infusion of the Holy Spirit in your life. The new mind that God promises to those who love Him. The new spirit.

The new heart. The Word of God coming alive and finding a living place in your heart. Now I know that there are some here today who have been bitten by the devil's report.

You have a poison that's stirring in you. And in some cases it's just a report about God. You came and you wanted to trust.

And maybe even made a step at one time. And then you went into some hard times and you didn't understand it and the devil suddenly struck you. And said, God can't be trusted.

His promises are just a religious game. Go out and enjoy evil. You will suffer no punishment for it.

There's no consequence to evil. It won't hurt you. God just doesn't want you enjoying things and becoming wise like He is.

Sounds familiar. Sounds like the Garden of Eden to me. And others, you've been poisoned in the house of God.

And young believers today, you've got to be aware of this. Not everybody in the church is a Christian. There will be a separation one day.

Down here, we're all mixed together. But one day comes when there's going to be a separation. Jesus said, by your words, you will be justified.

By your words, you will be condemned. In other words, yes, they can put on the mask and sway in the seat to the music and do all this stuff. But you see, there is a tape recorder running in heaven right now.

And every word that is being spoken is being recorded. Nobody is getting away with anything. And one day, those that may have looked so holy are going to stand before God and the tape is going to be played.

All the secret conversations, all the telephone calls, all the little meetings on the street corner, all the venomous bites against the authority of God, the leadership of God, are all going to be exposed for everybody to see. By your words, oh, I don't even intend to infer that as Christians we always speak the right thing. But what I'm saying is there is a difference in those who know Christ.

There is a conviction of the Holy Ghost. When we do what is wrong, we are quick to be moved by God to repent and to say, God, forgive me, Lord, forgive me for ever using my lips for the devil's purpose. God, don't let that be part of my life.

And those words, even if you've had a history in a sense of wrong speaking, those words are sufficient to show that there's an evidence of heart, as it is, that has caused you to come to Christ and belong to him. I'll make a way to escape. And for all those that have been bitten in one way or another by the enemy, you see, hell has a report on your life.

I'm going to conjecture into the realm of imagination if you will allow me to do that. And hell wants to make a report of you after the service today. And those who are captivated or victimized by evil speaking, the enemy of your soul, there are demonic powers.

I don't understand how they work. The Bible says I'm not to understand how they work. I'm to be innocent in what is evil and all knowledgeable in what is good.

And the God of peace will crush Satan under my feet shortly. That's what the Scripture said. I'm not to know how the powers of evil work.

I just know that they are and they do. But I want to show you what's going to happen today because there are people going to get out of their seat like they did in the days of Moses. And they're going to say, God, my lips are unrighteous.

Or I have this infusion of poison in my system and I want it out. I want it out. And I can see in my spirit demonic powers gathering after the service today and giving a report if such a thing even happens about sister so-and-so and brother so-and-so.

How is it going with them? Are they still in prison? Do they still belong to us? Are they still captivated by the lies? Are they still convinced that God is not faithful? Are they still convinced they cannot trust leadership in the church? Are they still infused with that poison? Now look with me in Acts chapter 5. This is my closing Scripture. Acts chapter 5. I want to show you now. I want to show you what's going to happen today at this altar.

I'll show you how Christ will break the demonic powers over your life. When you go out this door and Satan inquires and says, how is our victim? How is the one doing that we infused with poison? Acts chapter 5 verse 23. You all have it? Now here's your report after today's service.

Here's what the demonic powers will say about you. Saying that prison truly we found shut with all safety. And the keepers standing without before the doors.

But when we had opened, we found no man within. We don't understand it. We had it all shut in.

We had keepers all around. But somehow this person got out. Set free by the power of God.

Set free by the power of God. Would you please stand. Main Sanctuary Education Annex.

If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. You need to escape. The Bible says clearly that Christ is the way to escape.

You say, I'm an evil speaker. I've got to get away from this. Or I've been infused with an evil report.

It's become part of my thinking. I've even accused God of being unfaithful to me. And today, I want to get this thing right with God.

I'm coming to Christ. I'm going to look to Him. And I'm believing that I'm going to be released from this torment that's in my mind.

I'm going to be released from the paralysis that the devil has tried to put on me in the church body. I'm going to be set free. If you're unsaved, you come to this altar.

Christ will set you free from the power of sin and give you a new life. Up in the balcony, you can go to either exit. And make your way down to this altar in the main sanctuary.

Slip out. Come to this. I know this is a difficult altar call.

But it will be freedom for you. Absolute freedom. If you've been bitten by the serpent, you need to get down here.

Before, you are completely paralyzed in the work of God. You need to get down here and get that thing right with God. If you're a young person and you've distrusted God.

And you say, well, I tried it. It didn't work. No, that's just an ignorance on your part.

God is going to help you in the coming days to understand that His ways are not your ways. His paths are not your paths. And His plans are not your plans.

He has something much better for you than the pathway of sin in this world. Just come. Education Annex, please go forward between the screens.

We'll pray with you momentarily. Choir is going to lead us in a song. And as they do, make your way down here.

Make your way down. You're going to look to Christ. And you're going to be set free this morning.

The Bible says that an evil speaker will not be established in the earth. And we need to settle that in our hearts forever. Remember, if I give my mouth to evil, I will not be established.

There will be no sense of God's permanence, no direction, no provision, no protection. An evil speaker will not be established in the earth. But we heard through Isaiah that those who choose to speak rightly will be given a fortress to live in in Christ.

Will be given bread from God that satisfies. And a river of life. A constant opening of the spirit and the mind to Jesus Christ.

That enables us to lay hold of him by faith. And begin to allow him to give us the strength we need to be his people. You see, it's not an option in the Christian life to speak evil against somebody that God has perfected.

We need to really get that deep inside. Deep, deep inside. I'm always very cautious now in dealing with the church.

You see, if I speak against you and God has justified you, then he is duty bound to defend you. Which puts me in a very, very bad position. That means God will have to deal with me.

There's another scripture that says, God is in heaven and we are on the earth. Therefore, let your words be few. Say only what needs to be said.

Say it very graciously. Remember that in the measure we give out, it will come back to us again. Now let's pray.

And my prayer today is that evil speaking never get into this church. That we not be ignorant of the devil's devices. How he divides and destroys.

How he's always tried to divide and destroy the body. And ruin the effective testimony of Christ among God's people. I see a lot of young people in this, in the lines there.

Thank God for that. Teenagers, make sure you get into the youth ministry here. And get strengthened in God.

If you are visiting, find a good youth ministry in the town that you come from. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus Christ, I confess with my mouth that you are my Lord.

I repent of ever allowing Satan's poison about God and about God's people. And about myself to come into my thinking and become part of my life. I repent.

And today, I make a choice to stand in the victory of Christ on Calvary. And to believe that I am delivered from the venom of the devil. From the power of his lies.

From the evil of his working. I believe today that Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of the devil. I believe that Christ has given me the power to take up the serpent.

And command him to have no more part in my thinking, my heart, my life, my speech. And the ministry that God has entrusted to me. Satan, I say to you today.

The Lord rebuke your plans. The Lord rebuke your words. The Lord rebuke your designs.

You have tried to hold me. You have tried to hold my mind. My life.

You have tried to destroy me. And destroy my home. But I make a declaration to you.

This day, by the blood of Jesus, I am free. I am free. I am free.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the message.

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