

Standing On the Wrong Side of the Message

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to move from a place of weakness and silence to a place of boldness and action in sharing the message of Jesus Christ. It highlights the power of the Holy Spirit to empower and enable believers to be effective witnesses, even in the midst of personal struggles and societal darkness. The call is to step out in faith, overcome fear, and trust in God's strength to fulfill the mission of sharing the love and salvation found in Jesus.

Duration: 44:16

Scripture: Luke 23:44, Luke 24:45, Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 1:7, Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, 1 Peter 3:15, Ephesians 3:20, James 4:8, Psalm 27:1

Topics: "Boldness in Witnessing", "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to move from a place of weakness and silence to a place of boldness and action in sharing the message of Jesus Christ. It highlights the power of the Holy Spirit to empower and enable believers to be effective witnesses, even in the midst of personal struggles and societal darkness. The call is to step out in faith, overcome fear, and trust in God's strength to fulfill the mission of sharing the love and salvation found in Jesus.

Transcript

Standing on the wrong side of the message, Luke chapter 23. Father, I just thank you so much God for the presence of your Holy Spirit. Thank you Lord for your word which indeed is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

Thank you Lord that you delight in taking us in our weakness so that your strength might be made known. Lord, this is all about you. Every message that is spoken from this pulpit is about you.

All the ability that we have to move forward in grace is all about you. It's your life inside of us Lord that gives us hope. Thank you for this incredible and great redemption.

Rekindle our hearts, oh God. Do something in all of us Lord that will satisfy your heart and bring gladness to us. Father, I thank you for the ability to speak this word today and I thank you God for the ability of all of those that you've gathered today to hear it.

Oh God, give us ears to hear. Give us ears Lord. Help us to hear Lord.

We thank you for it in Jesus name. Luke chapter 23 beginning at verse 44. Standing on the wrong side of the message.

Now it was about the sixth hour and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, he said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

Having said this, he breathed his last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God saying, certainly this was a righteous man. And the whole crowd who came together to that site, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.

But all his acquaintances and the women who followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. I mean, this is the most momentous time in all the history of the world. The son of God had come into the world and taken the weight of the sin of humankind upon himself, allowing us an entrance.

When the veil was torn in the temple, there was no longer any separation between God and man through Christ. You have, I have, we all have access to the living God, to a relationship with the living God, to an eternity in heaven with God, to the assurance of our salvation. As difficult as some of our days might be, God promises a covering, a forgiveness that we belong to him.

He belongs to us. This was a miracle moment like none other in the history of the world. There will never be another moment like this ever.

The whole crowd was there. The centurion looking at the cross had seen a lot of death in his lifetime. But when he saw the sun darken for three hours, when the earth shook, the scripture tells us in another one of the gospels, and he heard a cry from this man on the cross like he'd never heard before.

When he had seen him ministering to a thief and giving him hope for his own future, even though both were at the point of death, he came to a conclusion that this man was a righteous man, a right living man, an honest man, a good man. It would have taken a lot for that centurion to come to that conclusion because he had seen a lot of death and heard a lot of cries in his lifetime. That was his occupation.

He was crucifying people outside of Jerusalem. The whole crowd came together, the scripture says, to see that sight. When they saw what had been done, they beat on their chest as it was.

It was a sign of anguish, a sign of something has happened here. We don't know what it is, something great, something maybe that was an injustice, something good. They were at a loss.

They felt there was something about this man, Jesus, and something that had just happened through his life, but they were at a loss to explain it. They could experience it, but they couldn't explain it. But all the people that had followed him for three years, now these folks, they had a Bible school like none in this world.

They sat and listened to Christ himself, the son of God, speak directly to them for three years. They could have asked any question they wanted to. They could have had all their questions answered by the one whose mind really has no boundaries, has no borders.

His knowledge has, you can't search the depths of his knowledge. It seems strange that everyone who followed him and were close to him were standing at a distance. If you can visualize it, you have the cross

of Christ here, the centurion in the crowd here, and the followers of Christ here.

Technically speaking, they should have been standing in front of the crowd saying to the people, what you are now seeing, what we are experiencing, because it had been clearly foretold them. It wasn't a secret. Back in Luke chapter 18, verses 31 to 33, the Bible says, he took the 12 aside and said to them, behold, we're going up to Jerusalem and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the son of man will be accomplished.

He will be delivered to the Gentiles and he will be mocked, insulted, and spit upon. They will scourge him and kill him. And the third day he will rise again.

Everything was told them. If you go through the gospels, you'll see it clearly. It wasn't hidden from them.

It was there in the scriptures. It was in the law. It was in the prophets.

So the question that comes to our mind is how are they now found standing at a distance? Why are they letting the people stare upon this cross, this great, great miracle of redemption and seemingly have nothing to say about it? We're living in a generation perhaps that is somewhat similar to this. Lifeway Research did a research project among the believers in this country and found that 61% of all believers in Christ in a six-month period prior to the survey had not told a single person how to become a Christian. Sixty-one percent.

That's more than six out of ten people. And 80% of the people there in those churches knew that they should. There's a major denomination in North America that just recently had a convention.

And in their convention, the statistic came forward. This is a born-again, evangelical, Bible-believing, spirit-filled denomination. Supposedly so.

But in their conference, the statistic came forward that 20%, 20%, you're talking about hundreds of all their churches in the last year, this past year, haven't won a single soul to Christ or baptized a single new believer. You're talking congregations of two, three, four hundred people and nobody winning anybody to Jesus Christ. Do we have the courage to look again today and say we might be standing once again on the wrong side of the message? We're living at a time when there's darkness all over the land.

Who can debate that anymore? The airwaves are filled with darkness. Television filled with darkness. The Internet filled with darkness.

It's, conversation has become so vile, violent. It seems like there's no boundaries of decency left anymore. It is dark.

It seems like the sun, the hope for the future in many people is gone, is taken away. Suicide in some genres of society is becoming almost epidemic. Drug addiction is coming to the point where whole towns and small cities are now being declared in states of emergency.

The sun is darkened. And even though the veil of the temple is still rent, even though there's still access to God through Jesus Christ, and people are beating their breasts, put it that way, but not quite sure how to get through. I guess the question we have to ask ourselves, are we standing again? Is history repeating itself? Are we standing on the wrong side of the message? Are we behind people when we should be standing in front of them? Are we hidden when we should be visible? Are we silent when we should be

speaking? A friend of mine called me just yesterday and told me he was traveling from a conference and he was sitting on a shuttle bus next to a young lady from this city, 25 years old, an accomplished professional.

They started a conversation, which led to a question. He started telling her about the love of God. She made an astounding statement.

She said, I knew there was somebody in history called Jesus, but I didn't know he was the son of God and nobody ever told me that he died for me. And right there with tears, she surrendered her life to Jesus Christ. Now, the question comes to mind, why were these people standing at a distance? They had the gospel.

They had walked with Christ. What could it be that caused them to stand with such silence at a moment when there was such an openness in society? I believe that all those people were open. People were beating on their chest.

There's an anguish inside. There's a sense that an injustice has been done here, but nobody rose up to speak. Nobody.

How heartbreaking that could be when people are under conviction or maybe just they're deeply longing for something and they know there's somebody out there called Jesus, but nobody's around to tell them who he is. What did he do? How can it affect my life? What kind of joy and stability can it bring into my heart? For many who are standing at a distance, you see, they had walked three years with Jesus Christ. And as they did, we do.

They formed opinions about what walking with God would look like. And don't forget, people came to Christ for different reasons. Some needed healing.

Some needed bread. He's the one who could multiply bread. He could bring provision.

Some needed to be reassured that they were loved, like the apostle John. There's just many people that came for very many reasons. And Christ is a healer.

He does heal those that are wounded. He does give hope for the future. He does give us an assurance that we're loved by God.

All of these things are important, but now they're being led to something that's just a little bit deeper. It's the finishing of their education, may I call it that. Now they're being confronted with something.

Firstly, they're afraid of being identified as Christ was with those who are being rejected by society. The scripture says there were also two others, criminals, led with him to be put to death. And when they come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified him and the criminals, the one on the right hand and one on the left.

Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them. They do not know what they do. And they divided his garments.

And so many people are just afraid to be identified with the weak and the weary, marginalized. They don't want to be laughed at. Don't want to be publicly humiliated.

That could be one of the reasons. In verse 34, it says they divided his garments and cast lots. Up to this point, it was all about what can I get from Jesus? I can get food.

I can get freedom. I get healing. I can have my mind put back in right order.

I can, in many cases, have my family come back to me. There was a lot that you could get from walking with Jesus. But all of a sudden now, they're looking at the cross and at the cross, his garments are being gambled for and taken away from him.

And suddenly they're confronted with the willingness to part from earthly things and earthly comforts. There's a call of the cross that tells you and tells me that there might sometimes be some hardship associated with this. Our relationship with Christ might not always just be about what we can get from him.

But it might cost us something to walk with him. Our comfort might be taken away. There's some things that we'd like to gravitate to and hold on to.

And they're suddenly being confronted with this, the reality that the one who could provide all things for all people is now having the little comfort he has in life taken away from him. And seems to be willing to let it go for a higher purpose and a higher reason. In verse 35, as we go on, it says, The people stood looking on, and even the rulers in them sneered, saying, He saved others.

Let him save himself, if he's the Christ, the chosen of God. The soldiers also mocked him, coming and offering him sour wine and saying, If you're the king of the Jews, save yourself. It's so hard to move into that deeper depth of Christ, where there has to be a willingness to be mocked, to be ridiculed, to be laughed at.

When you declare him to be everything he is, but then heartache comes into your own life. Hardship comes into your own family. And the people at work and the people maybe in your own home say, Ah, you who trust in God.

Yeah, you say God can do all things. Save yourself. And sometimes it's better just to be quiet than run the risk of being mocked by other people around us.

And now they're looking even deeper than this. In verse 39 of chapter 23, it says, One of the criminals who was hanged and blasphemed him, saying, If you're the Christ, save yourself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Do you not even fear God, seeing you're under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.

Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise. And so as they're standing in the back of the crowd and looking at the cross over the tops, may I put it, of the people who don't understand what this is all about, they're observing a Christ who's focusing on others, even in the midst of his own suffering.

There's a call to the cross, may I put it that way, that I have problems and so do you. And so I can spend my whole day focusing on my problems. We can gather in the room after the service today.

You tell me your problems, I'll tell you mine. And we'll be there. We won't even make it back for six o'clock.

We'll be still talking about each other's problems. We can pray, we can annoy each other, we can cry. But here's somebody on the cross who's actually ministering to somebody who has no hope, when he himself

is in incredible pain.

And sometimes people draw back. We draw back because didn't we come to Christ for comfort? Didn't we come to Christ to get our wounds healed? Isn't it just all about me? Isn't it about my family, my future, my job, my health? Isn't it about my mind? It's about my anointing, my ministry, whatever it is. Isn't it all about me? But now we're looking at this Christ who in the midst of unspeakable personal suffering is not even focused on himself.

He's ministering to somebody else who has no eternal hope. This can cause people to draw back. Say, look, I don't mind walking with you, Jesus, but I'm not very interested in suffering with you.

And in verse 46, I guess it sums it all up in chapter 23, where Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. In other words, it's putting my whole future into the hands of God. Whatever comes of it, whatever it will be, whatever it will produce, any life, any hope, any victory, God, it would all come from me.

I'm just simply surrendering my life into your hands. That's probably one of the hardest steps I had to make. And it's one of the hardest steps you have to make.

That day we feel God calling us to something more than what we are and where we are. And we have to say, Lord, I put my future into your hands. I remember leaving my full-time employment years ago because I felt called to preach the gospel and to pastor a little church out in the wilderness.

And I remember looking at it financially, and it was an absolute, it was an insane decision in the natural. But I had to put myself, I had to make a choice. I draw back to what is comfortable, what I can see, touch, taste, and feel, or I move with God and say, Lord, I put myself and my future and my wife and my children all in your hands, and I'm trusting you with it, Lord.

I'm trusting you. I remember when I used to keep meticulous financial records for our family and for our home. And I remember one day I was looking at this thing and I said, God, this is like a bumblebee.

It shouldn't fly, but somehow it does. And I remember the Lord spoke clearly, said, Carter, just close your book, put it away and trust me. And the Lord has never failed us.

Not one time has God ever failed us. Now, a lot of people, because of silence and quietness, and I'm speaking to people here today, that you haven't shared Christ in a long time. You find it hard to break out of where you are.

You're standing actually at the wrong side. You're standing behind the people, silent. You know about the cross, you understand the redemption, but you can't bring yourself to coming around to the other side and actually facing the people and saying to the people, can I tell you what Jesus did for you? Can I tell you about the love of God? Can I pray for you? And because of the fear in all of our hearts, we're hesitant to take that second step of our training, that second step of the cross.

We want to stay on the personal side. We want to come to church and it's always got to be all about me. It's got today, what's in it for me today? What new thing will God speak to my heart about my life, about my family, about my hope, about my future? Imagine getting a word like the Paul changed and afflictions abide you.

You have to be open for that kind of a word. You have to be open for what God is going to speak to our hearts. And so I speak today to those of us who find it hard.

I don't always find it easy. I've come under conviction to speak in certain times and found it very, very difficult. And sometimes I haven't.

Other times I have. Last week I was in a store and the lady at the counter looked like she really had a hard week. And so I just looked at her and I'm just getting to the point where I don't care anymore.

I'm just going to break out of the box. And I said, how are you doing anyway? She says, not too good, not too good. I lost my job after 25 years.

I said, oh, can I pray for you? Now there's other people in the stores, other people behind the counter. I said, can I pray for you? She said, would you do that? Would you do that? Would you pray for me? And so I just prayed for her. And God really touched her heart.

I thank God for that. It's something that we have to care more about others than we do about ourselves. May I put it that way? Or we're always going to be behind the crowd.

We're always going to be looking at the back of people's heads as they walk away from us and we have not shared anything with them. Now I'm gladdened in my heart that in the scripture, there's no evidence that Jesus Christ took offense to this lack on their part. I mean, couldn't we imagine he'd be on the cross and he could have said, get over here, you cowards and tell the centurion what he's seeing.

What's wrong with you? What are you doing standing behind the crowd? You all have, I've taught you for three years. You know, unless you want a failing grade, you move now, you move out of where you are now. And you tell this man what he's seeing.

Could you imagine him yelling, tell the crowd what you're standing behind instead of in front of how the grief of their hearts can be relieved. Tell them what's happening here. It shouldn't be hidden to you.

It's clearly revealed in the scriptures. You've, you know, who I am. Peter, you said I was the Christ, the son of the living God will get out of here and make that declaration.

John, you said you love me. Where are you, John? Where are you when I need you? Where are you when the people need you? Where are you? Are you afraid of being identified with me? No, he didn't say any of those things. Instead, he went after them just as he goes after us exactly where they were and exactly where we are today.

Oh, I thank God for his mercy. I thank God for his goodness. You need to know that today.

Maybe you haven't shared Christ with anybody in six months or longer, but Jesus Christ is not offended by you. You need to know that. As a matter of fact, he loves you enough that he's going to come to you right where you are.

In chapter 24 in verse four, there's some ladies that went to the tomb just to anoint his body. And when they got there, they found the stone rolled away. They found the tomb was empty.

And it happened, it says in verse four, as they were greatly perplexed that two men stood by them in shining garments. They were perplexed. They were confused.

They, they, they didn't understand the death. They didn't understand their responsibility. Now they don't understand the resurrection, but in the midst of their confusion, God sends two messengers to them to clear it all up, to clear it up, to let them know that the Christ of glory is not offended by your confusion.

May I put it that way? He's not offended by you. I feel that so deeply in my heart this morning that Jesus Christ is not offended by anybody here. He understands your struggle.

That's why he tells us to come boldly to the throne of grace in our time of need, that we may find help. Not when we're strong, but when we're weak, not when we know it all, but when we're confused. He says, come boldly into the throne of grace to find help in your time of need.

Come as an invited son and invited daughter. Come as somebody that God is glad to see. I'm glad you're here.

I know your struggle. I know your trial. I was tempted in all points, like as you are yet without sin.

I was tempted to walk away from the call of God too. In the garden of Eden, he could say to you, I went to my father three times as if once wasn't enough. I had the answer the first time.

I had the answer the second time. And I still went back the third time. And I said, father, if it'd be possible, I don't want to do this.

If there's any other way it can be done, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And so Christ could say to you today, I understand your reluctance. I understand your struggle because I had to walk through it myself and I'm familiar with it.

In verse 11, chapter 24, when the ladies came back and they told the apostles hidden in their upper room as it is of what had been told them, verse 11 says, all their words seemed to them as idle tales. The actual original translation says nonsense. And they did not believe them.

But Peter arose and ran to the tomb and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves. And he departed marveling to himself in what had happened. He's not offended when we find it hard to believe, when we can't believe that God can use us, when we find it hard to find the words to speak, when we don't know if God really will ever be able to use us.

He's not offended by our unbelief. Oh yes, his life through us can be limited by it, but he himself is not offended. He understands.

In verse 13 of chapter 24, it says, two of them are traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. We see Christ himself now coming up close to two men and walking with them. Two men who are disappointed.

Two men who thought that walking with Christ should be more than it had become. Two men that are perplexed because what looked like life suddenly led to death. What looked like victory seemed to have been conquered.

What looked like the way forward now suddenly seemed like the way backwards. It seemed like it was over. It was hopeless.

They didn't understand that what they had seen was the greatest victory of all time that would never be surpassed by any victory in history or in days to come. And they were so disappointed. You would think he could come up close to them and say, you knew this.

You were raised in this. You walked with me. I told you about this.

So what are you doing here? See, he wasn't offended. He walked beside them. He opened the scriptures.

He gave them understanding that he sat at the table with them and broke bread. And when he broke the bread in communion, their eyes were opened. Why do you think their eyes were open? It's because suddenly they realized, oh God, it's in the giving of ourselves that the power of God is understood.

It's in the giving of, it's allowing the breaking of a self-focus. May I put it that way? The willingness to be given for others. It's in that place that spiritual eyes are given.

It's in that place that joy comes back into our heart. And the scripture says they left that table. They ran back into Jerusalem and they started, they met the disciples and others in the upper room and said, we've seen him.

He's alive. He's alive. He's alive.

And as they find themselves standing in that room with a bunch of people who are unable to move forward in verse 36, he says, as they said these things, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said to them, peace be to you. You see Christ comes to us in our inability to move forward. You might be among the 80% that know you should share your faith, but also among the 61% of the 80 who don't.

Say, God, I know it's right and I want to, but oh God, oh God, I can't move forward. I want to. I know I should.

And I'm just so tired of just walking away convicted. I walk out of the grocery store convicted. I should have shared.

I walk away from kids on the corner and convicted. I'm just so sick of the inability to speak, to open my mouth. I don't know why that is.

Maybe I am like these other people. Maybe I'm afraid of being ridiculed. Maybe I'm afraid of taking a step of faith and having it all blow up in my face.

Maybe I'm just afraid, period, of the rejection of people. I don't know why, but oh God, would you come to me in my inability? That has to be the cry of this church age. When we have so many churches winning nobody to Christ because of self-focus and we have so many people not even inviting anybody to the house of God, let alone tell them about Christ, especially, folks, listen to me, people are beating on their chest again.

The Centurion is standing there one more time. You saw it at Christmas time. Our altars were filled with people right into the lobby.

It's the first time ever, I think, at Christmas we've ever seen a response because people are beating on their chest again saying, this world is dark. This world is falling apart. The sun seems to be gone.

There doesn't seem to be the dawn of a new day ahead of us. Incivility, immorality, violence, vileness seem to be everywhere. What about Jesus? And you see a society just beating on their chest saying, God, is there something to this name? In verse 45 in that upper room, it says, he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the scriptures, not just their viewpoint of God, but they might have a full scope of what the Christian life should be.

He opened their understanding. And that would make it even worse for some. Like today, if you could say, Pastor, I agree with everything you say.

I agree I should be speaking about Jesus. I should pray for people to look down. I agree.

But where do I get the power to do this? Now, after opening their understanding in Luke chapter 24 to the scriptures in verse 45, now in verse 46, then he said to them, thus it is written and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. In other words, if you could tell people that they should turn from their sin, their sin will be forgiven through Jesus Christ.

And this message is for all people everywhere. Now he's talking to a group of people who could not even muster the courage to speak his name at the cross itself. And you are witnesses of these things.

Now up to this point, I could feel a sinking feeling in that room. Oh, great. Now you had a burden on top of my cowardice.

Now you tell me I'm to be a witness of these things. But in verse 49, he says, behold, I send the promise of my father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. And this is the beauty of everything I see in this entire Luke 23, Luke 24.

He says, I will do for you what you cannot do for yourself. Hallelujah. If you will open your heart to me, I will send the Holy Spirit to you.

You will have power to be a witness of who I am. You will have another heart. You will have another source of strength.

You'll be given another voice. There'll be a love for people in your heart that the Bible says will cast out from you all fear. The fear of man will be gone.

The fear of loss will be gone. You will have something in your heart. Not only will you be inviting one, you'll be inviting two, five, eight, 10 people to the house of God.

You're going to become an evangelist. I prophesied that to people here this morning. You will become an evangelist.

You may never have a title. You may never stand in a pulpit, but I tell you, you will be an evangelist. You will begin to speak the name of Jesus, not in your own strength, not out of compulsion, but out of compassion.

There'll be a power of God inside of you. This is what he's telling the people. They are in this upper room.

They have been confused. They have run. They have not had the power to stand when they know they needed to stand.

They had not only run from the garden of Gethsemane, they had actually stayed in the background at the cross itself. They would feel a sense of shame and failure in their hearts. But to all of this, he says, no, I'm going to send the promise of my father on you, and you're going to be endued with power from on high.

And he led them out, verse 50, as far as Bethany and lifted up his hands and blessed them. And now it came to pass while he blessed them, that he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Now, what did they do? The scripture says they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

They continually came to the house of God and said, Lord, thank you for the promise of your power. Now, there was a season from when the promise was given and the Holy Spirit came. You know that.

But they did not quit. They did not say, Lord, you're not faithful to your word. They just started coming to church.

May I put it that way? And they started praising, and they started blessing, and they started thanking. They said, God, you're going to fill me with power. God, you're going to give me the ability to speak your name.

You're going to make me a living witness of who you are. You're going to give me the power to speak to other people, even when I am in pain. You're going to help me not to focus on my own need only, but to focus on the needs of others around me.

You are going to give me the ability to stand out in the crowd and to endure the mockery of those who fight against their own salvation for the sake of others. You're going to give me this power. I'm not going to back down.

I'm not going to bow down. You're going to put a perfect love in my heart that casts out the fear of human rejection, human ridicule, and human scorn. I'm believing you, God, with all my heart that your promise is true.

You cannot lie. You told me that whatever I asked for, believing I would receive. You told me that I could speak to mountains, and they would be removed and cast into the sea.

And so I speak to the mountain of fear and self-consumption in my own life, the mountain of fruitfulness. And I cast this thing into the sea, and I'm coming to the house of God, and I'm going to begin thanking and blessing and praising God that he is going to be faithful to me. I am expecting a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit in my life.

I recognize. I recognize. And quite often, the church has to come to that place.

You have to come to that place. I have to come to that place where I recognize my inability. I recognize the futility of my own efforts, the frailty of my own heart, the weakness of my own testimony.

And so suddenly, on the side of the road, I simply cry out, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. God, give me what only you can do in my life. And when it starts to happen, let the glory go back to you, O God.

May I bring back glory to your name through it. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ. We can say today, many of us can say, I believe, Lord, but I'm afraid.

Jesus, come and get me. Come and get me where I am. There's some folks here today, you're on your own in Mayesh Road.

Some of you are in the garden, looking at an empty tomb. Some are standing behind the crowd, and you're just sick of looking at the back of people's heads when you should be looking in their faces. You're tired of being a silent testimony in a generation that needs a vocal Jesus.

You're tired of it. You're tired of being afraid of being mocked on the job and mocked in your home and mocked in your family, mocked by your neighbors. You're tired of being weary to run the risk, in a sense, of stepping up for Jesus and people mocking and pointing out your struggles and your failures, throwing them all back in your face.

But for their sakes and for Christ's sake, you're willing today, as I am, to say, Jesus, come get me where I am. I can't get to you, so you're going to have to get to me. And you will find out he's not offended with that prayer.

He's not disappointed in you, not angry with you. He's not using you as a bad example in heaven right now. He loves you.

He loves you with a passionate love. He engraved you in the palms of his hands. Your name is on his lips right now.

And he says, let me now put my name on your lips. Let me now give you the ability to speak about me. Let me give you a heart that cares about people who are dying in their sin.

Let me give you the courage to stand up and be counted for the sake of those who need to know they can have a Savior. Let that be the cry of this last generation. History does repeat itself.

And yes, many of God's people are standing at the back of the crowd again. Oh, thank God for the upper room. When the Holy Spirit came, there was nobody in that room standing at the back of the crowd any longer.

And surprise, surprise, 3,000 people bent their knee to Christ that day. Surprise, surprise. When we step out in the power of God's Holy Spirit, watch what will begin to happen.

With the compassion of God, with the love of God, with the conviction of God, the courage of God, the message of God, watch what will happen in people's lives. Father, I thank you with all my heart today. Thank you, Lord, for the simplicity of what you are calling us to be, your willingness to be our strength when we have none left, our voice when our voices are gone, the love in our hearts when our supply has grown rather dim.

Lord, take us out of self-consumption. Give us a heart to recognize that people are going into eternity without you if we don't tell them. Let it be compassion that motivates us, not compulsion.

And thank you for coming to get us where we are. Thank you for not judging us or condemning us in our weakness, but for giving us the strength that we need to be the people that we're called to be. Lord, I love you, and I thank you.

You could have written me off a hundred times, but your mercy has always covered me. I bless you with all my heart. Bless this church today, giving us hearts to believe you, the willingness to go forward, the

desire to let you be God.

I thank you for it in Jesus' name. I want to give an altar call this morning. Very simple.

Lord, this is me. Here I am. Come and get me.

You can't bring anything to him today but an empty heart, and let him fill it. Powerless life, and let him empower it. A wordless mouth, and let him put the speech of heaven in it.

Just bring him the nothingness of your life, and let him be God, and trust him, and start to praise him. We're going to stand, and if that's you, in the balcony, go to either exit, the main sanctuary, slip out of your seat. Let's meet here, and let's begin to pray together.

Hallelujah. Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty, many years ago, I knew my weakness. I knew my inability to speak.

I knew my inability to even live right, and in my emptiness, I called out to you, and you met me powerfully in a halfway house, and in my own kitchen, Lord. You met me and filled me with your spirit, changed the course of my life and my heart. So now, Lord, this morning, I'm asking you to do for these people what you did for me.

I'm asking you to meet all of us in our emptiness. Meet us, Lord, in our inability to change, to speak, to even care. We simply come before you.

You are the one who said, if my people are called by my name, will humble themselves. So we do that today, Lord. We recognize that we have no boast to bring to you, no ability, and we have no track record of faithfulness, Lord.

We know we've stood behind the crowd many times when we should have stood in front of them. So, Lord, we bring to you everything. Our weakness, we bring our failure, because you are the victor, Lord.

You are the one with all power and all authority. Yours is the only kingdom, and to you belongs the only glory. So, God, have mercy on this church age, Lord.

Have mercy on all of us, Lord. We ask, Lord, for your Holy Spirit. Forgive us, God, for all the programs.

Forgive us for all the things that we've done, Lord, that sadly could even exist without your presence. Lord, we don't want anything but you. We don't want anything but your presence.

We don't want a program. Lord, we don't want performance. We don't want human effort.

We want you, Holy Spirit. We want you, Lord God, with all of our heart. And so, Lord, we're going to choose to do what they did.

We're going to continually come to the temple and bless and praise you and thank you for your promises, which are true. And God, at the right time in every heart, you're going to send the Holy Spirit, and you're going to raise us up, Lord, to be a testimony, for that's what you said we are. Lord, forgive us for being less than what we're supposed to be, but we recognize that without you, it will never happen.

And we don't want it to happen without you. It'll just be another dead program. We want your life, your heart, your words, your voice, Lord.

We want to care. We want to care, Lord. It's so easy in this generation not to even care.

We want to care. Lord, you cared for a thief. Even in your own pain, we want to care.

We want to care. So, God, fill us with your Holy Spirit, your power, your grace, your goodness, Lord. Each one of us, God.

I ask you, Lord, that from this altar today, that there would just be a renewed compassion in every heart. Maybe a new compassion that's never been there. A desire and ability.

Give us the courage to step through the veil that separates us from your power and from people. Give us the courage, Lord. The veil was torn.

Help us, God Almighty. We thank you for these things, Lord. Let nobody, nobody end up in hell because we didn't tell them there was a heaven.

Have mercy, Lord, on your church. Have mercy, God. Have mercy on this house.

Have mercy on churches across the country. Have mercy on churches, so many, so many, so dead. Have mercy, Lord, on all of us, God, and raise us up again, especially now.

We thank you for it with all of our heart this day. We praise you. We praise you, Lord.

We praise you, God. In Jesus' name.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/9gqU_abKZ_M.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/carter-conlon/standing-on-the-wrong-side-of-the-message/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net