

Staying Silent in a Perilous Time

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to overcome fear and boldly share their faith in a time of increasing godlessness.

Duration: 48:57

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:6

Topics: "Bold Witness", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to overcome fear and be bold witnesses for Christ in a perilous time. It highlights the power of God to give strength, love, and a sound mind to speak the truth of Jesus, even in the face of rejection and opposition. The message calls for a deep desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be compelled by God's love to share the gospel with others, regardless of the response or circumstances.

Transcript

I feel victory in this house. Bless the Lord. Mark this day on your calendar, because today you're going to be free.

You didn't ask me of what yet. Today's going to be a wonderful day. There's been a witness of the Holy Spirit from the moment we stepped into the house of God this morning.

This afternoon, Pastor William will be speaking on the topic of the power to forgive. And I really feel this is a message that people need to hear. And this evening, one of our young intern evangelists will be bringing the Word of God tonight, and there'll be testimony.

So please don't abandon the Sunday night service, folks. Many, many people are coming to Christ. Bring your friends here, your neighbors.

And you don't even have to explain it. Just say, come and experience it. Just come and feel the presence of God.

I've watched it week after week. I like watching the skeptics, in particular, that come in. You know, the kind, folded arms, condescending smile, looking around.

About 15 to 20 minutes in, the tears start. They start wiping their faces, because the presence of God is undeniable. And I thank the Lord for that.

I'd like you to turn to 2 Timothy, please, chapter 1. And also, if you could find 1 John, chapter 4, for time's sake, 2 Timothy, chapter 1, 1 John, chapter 4. I want to speak to you this morning about staying silent in a perilous time, staying silent in a perilous time. Now, Father, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. I thank you for mercy and for strength for all of us.

Thank you, Lord, that you've invited us into something that you've already determined to do in our time. Not because we're strong or wise. Lord, because you're merciful.

There's no other reason. And you're kind. You are good, and your mercy does endure forever.

Help us to hear these words. God, thank you that you're not only willing to speak to us, but to give us the power to obey. And I thank you for this with all my heart.

Touch this frail vessel with your Holy Spirit, and give me the ability to speak this clearly. Let every heart be able to hear it. And I thank you for it in Jesus' name.

2 Timothy chapter 1, beginning at verse 6 to verse 12. Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner. But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

For the which cause I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he's able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. I want to speak to you today about what causes so many of us to be silent about Christ at such a critical moment in history.

At this present moment in America, godlessness has pulled into the fast lane. There's an agenda that has sensed the moment of opportunity. The godless agenda has made its move to overtake everything that is longstanding and cherished, all Bible-based value and tradition as it has been known.

This shouldn't surprise us. There's been a godless agenda that always, always follows every nation, every nation that knows God or has known God, and it's traveled with us all along, but been kept in check because God's people and God's house has had a visible testimony. I believe more now than ever before, you and I need to regain our testimony as the people of God and honestly take a look at why so many are quiet at such a perilous time.

I remember when I was a police officer in Canada, the laws of that country state that it is a crime both to do something that causes harm to another person or to neglect to do something that allows another person to go in to a place of harm. Both were a crime. When we think about the numbers of people who are about to perish without God, the numbers of people in our generation who are living an illusion that

somehow mankind can pursue its own objectives in its own reasoning and its own wisdom, and some kind of a utopian end awaits them.

When the end that awaits humankind without God is something that our minds can't even comprehend because of the terror of it. It's not time for the Church of Jesus Christ to be silent. It's time for you and I to speak as we've never spoken before.

Now Paul identifies the root of silence as being fear-based. Now principally as I see it, it's the fear of retaliation and rejection. Paul calls it the afflictions of the gospel.

He says, for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a power that would be power over this fear that would dominate us, and of love, and of a sound mind. He said, be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. It's not even debatable that there's going to be rejection.

There's going to be retaliation verbally at least when we are standing for what represents God in a godless time. There's no doubt about it. And Paul is writing to this young convert who's being trained in the ministry and saying, Timothy, don't back away because it's going to be difficult.

Don't back away because people are going to reject you. Don't back away because there's going to be inconvenience or even retaliation. But God is willing to give us the power to partake of these afflictions of the gospel.

These things that are going to come. Else, a little later on, Paul says to Timothy, the husbandman that labors must be first partaker of the fruits. God give you wisdom in this.

Timothy, you're going to have to go through some things. You're going to have to go through some trials, some difficulties, some hard times. There are popular seasons in various parts of the world where it's even popular to be a follower of Christ.

But then there are seasons where it's not popular to follow Christ. And of course, we're in such a season right now. Now the question that comes to each of our hearts is, why would we, why should we, knowing the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, why are we so afraid of what people think of us? Why does their approval mean so much to us and their rejection have such power to cast us down? Why does it really matter what unsaved people think? Why are we so afraid of the sneers, the scorns, the threats, all of the condescension that comes towards those of us who actually know what the truth is? There is a heaven.

There is a hell. Both are rapidly coming this way. And in between the two, there is a Savior.

We know the truth. We know the truth because the truth is alive in us. We know the truth because we've experienced the truth.

And not just a mental ascent of the truth, that's wonderful in itself, but the truth has set us free. The truth has produced in us new life. The truth has made us into new creations.

The truth is bringing us into greater measures of strength and freedom every day as we sincerely follow Christ. And so we know it's not just a concept about God, but it's a living reality of God inside of us. We know the truth.

So then why does the scorn, why do the sneers, why does the condescension of those who are headed to an eternity without God and everything that that entails, why does their condescension have the power to cast us down? Why does it have the power, seemingly, to cause us to keep our mouths quiet? Proverbs 29.25 tells us that the fear of man brings a snare. It's a snare to be afraid of man. And why are so many people afraid of other people? Do you know that one of the number one fears in humankind is public speaking? Why is that? Why are we afraid to stand in front of people and speak? Why are we afraid to be singled out? Why are we so afraid of people's opinions of us? Why does our whole identity, if we're given a 15-minute lecture to perform somewhere, why does our whole identity suddenly hinge on the success or failure of what we're given to say based on people's opinions of what is it inside of us that causes us to be so afraid of other people? Now, I believe that the fear of man has its fuel source in our own nature, our sin nature.

Remember, in Genesis chapter 3, it tells us clearly that sin became entrenched in the human race when we in ourselves fell into the illusion that we could be gods or as gods. Remember, Satan came to Adam and Eve and said, God knows in the day you partake of this that I'm laying before you. Essentially, I'm paraphrasing, but that's what he was saying.

You will be as gods. And you will know good, and you will know evil. Now, Satan himself was not content to be a worshiper in heaven.

He wanted to be worshiped in heaven. And that lust in his own heart led him to think outside of the parameters that God's word had established for him. And he fell.

And when he came down into the earth, he brought that fallen nature into the Garden of Eden. And he sowed that nature into humankind, into the human race. And when that nature to be as gods is sown in us, every one of us has that nature.

We have a sin nature. And the sin nature wants to live independently of God, wants to think independently of God, and wants to ultimately be as God. That means I can determine my own course.

I can decide what's right. I can decide what's wrong. God's ways I don't have to follow.

They're too restrictive. They're too narrow. God gave me a mind, and God gave me ability to think.

And therefore, I can operate outside of the borders of the parameters that God has laid down for my life. And somehow, I can reach the same utopian end that those who live within these narrow borders claim that they also have access to. Now, that's called the sin nature.

It's a delusional state that humanity falls into when that nature of Satan is allowed to reign unchecked inside of them. Now, with that nature entrenched in humanity, the next and obvious step is the desire to be worshipped. Isn't that amazing? Clearly, God would never go along with the plan.

So the only thing left was for fallen people to turn to each other for approval, for accolades, and for applause. That's why it means so much to people what other people think, because we want to be worshipped. It's our sin nature.

That's what our sin nature is all about. That's why we can be lifted up by the applause, and we can be cast down when the applause meter suddenly just doesn't even hit the red line. It sits around 30, when it should be, in our estimation, about 80.

That's why humankind is so lost for the praise of man. That's why people are driven to the industries where they live in this realm of adoration and accolades. And when they get there, it's such a trap that they hate it, but they're addicted to it.

They don't know what to do without it. The lust for men's approval is like heroin addiction, really. You know it's going to kill you, but you can't do without it.

You look at the mass of people who reach the pinnacle of adoration, their lives, and suddenly hating the very thing that they long for. It's just so ironic. The only way to escape this snare, according to the Apostle Paul in chapter 1, verse 7 of Timothy, is, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

The only way to escape this snare is to call out to the Christ who's within us, the Christ who lives in these earthen temples, the Christ who can give us the ability to escape the gravitational pull in all of us for the approval of other people, but also give us the power and the love of God to turn back towards those who live without God for their own good. In other words, we can escape either their praise or their criticism, but we come back. We come back because of this one reason, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.

There's no other reason. This love of God, which has the power to resist the need for other people's approval without rejecting them, is ours in Jesus Christ. John chapter 6 and verse 15 says, when Jesus perceived that the people were going to come by force and make him a king, he departed to a mountain place alone.

He had within himself the power to resist the accolades of man, but he also had the love of God so entrenched in him that he could come back and be given for the needs of those who didn't know that they were headed to an eternity without God. This is the perfected love of God, and it's this perfected love that gives us the strength to face the day that we live in and to do what we know must be done. It's this love that has to be the core of your heart, and it has to be the core of mine.

Without this, I believe there's going to be a falling away in the days ahead. Much of what calls itself the Church of Jesus Christ will cave in in this country to the criticism of a whole generation that feels it can live without God and will be driven into silence, but the love of God will compel us to speak. The love of God will drive out fear.

Look at 1 John chapter 4 now, please, if you have it there already in your Bibles, beginning at verse 13. Here's what the Scripture says, Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

We've seen it, and we testify of it. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he is God. I don't feel that's just a belief in it, but it's something that is constantly coming forth from our inward parts, because doesn't the Bible say, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth will speak? And he who confesses and continues to confess and is not ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ, is not afraid of the sneers of man, is not afraid of the rejection of a society that is hell-bent on its own destruction.

And we have known, verse 16, and believed the love that God has to us. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the

day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. He that fears is like a blind man who was touched of Christ, but only saw people as trees walking.

He had only a half a vision, and when he came back again for that second touch and found the Lord was willing to touch him, then it says he saw all men clearly. He that fears is not perfected in the love of God. That's how I read this passage of Scripture.

Doesn't have a heart to see men the way God sees them. And because of that, is driven back by their hard looks, is driven back by their condescension, is driven back by their inference that somehow we lack intelligence, because we believe in God. I don't ever want to stand before the Lord one day and have somebody that I knew look me in the eye and say, you knew that this was true.

You knew that this place existed. You knew there was a heaven and a hell. Why didn't you tell me? I know I was nasty, but why didn't you open your mouth and tell me anyway? You knew this place existed.

You knew that all men were going to go. You knew I was going to go here. You knew my children were going to go here.

Why didn't you speak to me? For what justifiable reason would you keep your mouth closed when my house was on fire and you were walking back and you saw it? You saw my children playing in the traffic and yet you said nothing. What reason do you have for this? The only reason that a child of God would have is I wanted your favor more than the favor of God. I wanted you to praise me.

I wanted you to like me. I wanted you to speak well of me. I didn't want you to laugh at me.

I wanted your applause. I wanted your accolades. I wanted you to stand up and tell everyone how wonderful I was.

Oh, there's such a trap when you and I get to the place where we love the praise of men more than the praise of God. He goes on to say, if any man says I love God and hates his brother, and you know in the original text it's amazing. The word hate translated in the King James in the original text, if you want to go back, it really speaks of also indifference.

He says he loves God and really is indifferent to his brother. He's indifferent to the person that he has contact with and his nose is going into hell and just shrugs his shoulders and basically just goes his way. So how is it possible to say that we love God and yet have this indifference to fallen men inside of our hearts? Paul tells Timothy in verse 8 of 2 Timothy 1, be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.

I remember when I first got saved. I loved God, you know. I loved going to church.

I loved singing. The hymns were brand new to me and I'd open them up and I'd actually cry as I was singing them. I loved the fellowship.

I loved the feeling of God's presence. But it just couldn't translate in the first couple of years into what happened outside of the church. Not only was I ashamed of Christ, afraid to be rejected, I was also ashamed of those that knew Christ and loved Christ.

I remember walking down the street with some of my friends one time, the police department, seeing a Christian walk towards me and I was just cringing inside. I didn't mind giving somebody a hug at church. I didn't mind saying God bless you, God love you, what a wonderful day, this is the day the Lord has made, but not in the street with my friends with me.

And many of you know exactly what that's like. And so I'm sharing it so that you know that your struggle is not unique to you, but it's common to all people. We all have to go through.

We've all got to break that barrier. And it's only a paper barrier. It's like the beginning of a football game.

You ever notice that when the football players come running out in the field, they break through this paper barrier? It's just a paper barrier, that's all it is. And at some point we have to break through this and get into the game, may I put it that way. And I didn't know how, and I was so tired of being ashamed of Christ in public.

I was so tired of being afraid to stand out and be different and be distinct that it drove me into desperation. And I got so tired of it, I remember the day I was driving down the street in my patrol car, and I literally punched the steering wheel, and I was so fed up with myself after almost two years of this, and I said, God, I'm going to serve you if it kills me. I'm tired of this.

I'm sick of it. I remember the next day or thereafter at work, another Christian police officer said to me, Carter, he said, we're going down to the prison. We're going to share Christ during the week on an evening.

And he said, the chief's given us permission to do this in uniform, and I remember thinking, I said, Bob, there was a riot there just a while ago. I said, if there's a riot in that prison wearing uniform, we're dead, we're absolutely dead. And he said to me, I know.

He said, do you want to come or not? And I remember thinking, I remember all of a sudden I got this flashback to a couple days before hitting the wheel saying, I'll serve you if it kills me. And so eventually I said, all right, I'll go. And we were on the way to the prison, and on the way there, he said, let's stop a friend of mine who was an affiliate of the outlaws, it's a type of a Hell's Angels motorcycle gang.

In Canada, he said it's a one-year spiritual birthday. I looked at him, I said, that's not possible. There's no way this guy could be living for God.

I know what these guys, I know their initiation rights and what they go through to get into this gang. How is it possible this guy's living for the Lord? And he said, well, you want to come? And I thought, well, the halfway house is not so bad. It's a whole lot better than the regional prison.

And so we went to this halfway house on the way to the jail. And when we were there, this whole place was full of heavy-duty ex-cons. I'm not talking about heavy-duty.

This wasn't a light transition center. This was heavy-duty. And they were all loving God.

They're all talking about Jesus. They're not ashamed to tell me what they've done, where they've been, how God has saved them, how he's filled them with the Holy Spirit. And the director of the house ended up asking us if they were having a service.

Will you stay for the service? And Bob turned to me and said, do you want to stay here instead of going to the jail tonight? And I thought, sure, I've been given the choice. I'll stay here for sure. So we stayed at this halfway house.

They had a great service. The testimonies were phenomenal. The worship was incredible.

The presence of God was as thick as oil in the room. And at the end, when it's all over, all these ex-cons gathered around. I'm in uniform.

I still have my gun. The real gun is on me. And I'm standing there.

And they said, have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? And I said, I reverted to my theology. And I said, yeah, of course. When I received Christ, I was filled with the Holy Spirit, which is true in measure.

I mean, we do receive the Holy Spirit. And they said, yeah, but have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? And I said, well. And I looked at them, and I thought, how arrogant.

What a thought. I thought, well, you guys need that. You're getting out of jail.

You know, you're trying to reintegrate into society. And you know, I mean, you got it real tough. So God's got to have something for you to kind of get you out of here and back into society.

But me, of course, you know. And I'm thinking, you hypocrite. You can't speak even the name Jesus outside of these doors.

You're ashamed of the name of Christ. You don't have any power, and you know you don't. And they said, would you let us pray for you? God give you his spirit.

And I said, all right, OK, I will. You can pray for me. And then some guy went around and stood behind me.

I said, get away from me. Don't stand behind me. I said, I never like people standing behind me.

And they said, you'd probably be wise if we stood there. I said, no, I don't need anybody standing behind me. So I lifted my hands, and they began to pray.

And the next thing you know, I hit the hardwood floor, not expecting that to happen. And I remember laying there in uniform on this hardwood floor speaking in another tongue, thinking that if the chief ever finds this out, they're going to put me in a psychiatric hospital. But it wouldn't go away.

It just wouldn't go away. And I remember coming out, and I think, was that real? Did that really happen to me? And I got in my car, and all the way home, every time I'd open my mouth, it's just this river would come out of my mouth. And I was just so aware of that.

The presence of God. Now, we were being discipled in a church that didn't believe in the second touch of the power of God for the purpose of witnessing to Christ. And I remember coming in the door of our farmhouse, and my wife was sitting there.

I said, hey, listen to this. And then I started to speak in tongues. And I ran out the door.

We had a farm at that time, a sheep farm. And I was running through the fields shouting and praising and singing and speaking in tongues. And Pastor Teresa sat there, and she said, oh, God, my husband has

lost his mind.

He snapped. She eventually saw that there was such a change in my life. I was no longer bound by fear.

I was no longer ashamed to speak the name of Jesus Christ. There was, I found God put a compelling love in my heart. Yes, there was affliction.

There was trouble. I was opposed. I was threatened.

But I couldn't stop speaking, because I genuinely cared about the people I was speaking to. It wasn't a program. It wasn't something that you do.

I wasn't waiting for the right moment to hand out a tract. I was compelled to speak about Jesus Christ. These men and women who worked in this department I was part of were dying in their sin.

And somebody, somebody with the compassion of God had to reach out. And I thank God. I thank God for that moment.

And I want to tell you today that if you are desperate, you have to be desperate. You have to want to be a witness for Jesus Christ. You have to be sick of the powerlessness.

You have to be sick of being one thing in church and being something else on the job. You have to be sick of it inside. And say, God, I've had enough of this.

And I don't care who laughs at me. And I don't care who thinks I've lost my mind. I don't care what people say.

I want the power of God. I want the touch of God in my life. I want this victory that Jesus offers to those who belong to him.

I knew I was saved. And I knew the Holy Spirit was in my life. And I knew if I died, I was going to heaven.

But that wasn't enough. I wanted the power of God to stand in a public way for Jesus Christ. I saw the promises in God's word.

Paul says, be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. God said, I saw you coming and I made a way for you. I made a way for you to fulfill the calling of God that will come on your life, not in just part measure, but in full measure.

I made a way for you to be a voice for the kingdom of God. I made a way for you to love people with a supernatural love. I made a way to give you courage that only God can give to humankind.

I made a way to cut the cords of needing the praise and the approval of man and coming back again in the power of God because the love of God constrains you to speak to them. I made a way for you to stand in prisons. I made a way for you to go into all nations throughout the world.

I made a way for you to stand in your school, stand in your college, stand in your community, stand in your neighborhood, stand in your home. I made a way for you to stand. Not by your ability, but by the power of God, I made a way for you to be everything God says that I called you to be.

But now is made manifest by the appearing of our savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Jesus Christ destroyed the penalty and power of sin. He gave a clear testimony of victory in life through what you and I have been called to speak.

We're not only called to speak about victory, we're called to live in victory. We're called to be a living testimony. But now, he said, this victory, this plan of God that was made in the heart of God before the world began has now been made evident by the appearing of our savior, Jesus Christ.

Well, Christ lives in me. Christ lives in you. And when we allow God to be God in us, that victory begins to appear.

The darkness starts to dissipate. The bondages start to be broken. The wounds are healed.

The prison doors open before us. We're brought into the realm of a supernatural life. We're given giftings.

We don't naturally possess. We're given abilities we could never attain in our own strength. We're given words we could never come up with with our own reasoning, that the power and the glory might be of God and not of us.

Hallelujah to the lamb of God. I thank God that in our weakness, he is willing to be strong. I thank God he's willing to endure with our frailties.

I thank God he's touched with the feelings of our weaknesses and our infirmities and tells us, come boldly now to the throne of grace. Come with confidence. Come as sons, come as daughters.

Come to find strength to help in your time of need. Glory to the name of Jesus. Paul said in verse 11 and 12 of 1 Timothy, where unto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles, for which cause I also suffer these things.

In other words, Paul says, I suffer. I'm called and I'm appointed. Every one of us in this sanctuary today, everyone in Roxbury, everyone listening at home, everyone who will hear this tape in the future, everyone in the education annex, we are called and appointed by God to be vocal witnesses of these truths.

We're not called to be silent in a moment of crisis. We are called to stand for what we believe in. We're called to stand and not be ashamed.

I'm not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I'm not ashamed to stand in this pulpit and say he is the God of my life and has transformed me and continues to work in my life. I'm not ashamed to say there is only one way to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

I'm not ashamed of the cross. I'm not ashamed of the simplicity of Jesus Christ. I'm appointed a preacher, an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles, for which cause I suffer these things.

Nevertheless, I'm not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he's able to keep that which I've committed to him against that day. I know that I've been appointed to speak. That's gotta be something in everyone's heart today.

I'm not afraid of rejection. I'm not afraid of the scorn. I'm not going to cower down under the sneers of a fallen humanity.

I know that God, Paul said, will keep me to the end of my journey. He will preserve me, and he will keep his love alive in my heart that I'll not become jaded or dismayed. He will keep his love alive in my heart that I'll not become dismayed or angry.

He will give me the power to love those that hate me for their soul's sake. He will give me the strength that was his when they walked by his cross and reviled him and wagged their heads and laughed and joked and gambled for his garments. And all that came out of his mouth, if his father forgave them, they don't know what they do.

They have no knowledge of who they're mocking, and they don't see what's ahead of them. You and I must not be silent in a perilous time. The only thing that will open our mouths is the power of God and the love of God.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a power and of love and a sound mind. The sound mind is simply to know that these things are right and they're true and the sense to simply move towards it, the sense to get up and do like this ex-cop did almost 36 years ago, just got up and walked towards the promise of God. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but power and love and a sound mind.

And the sound mind says this is right and this is true. And what God has done for others all throughout history, he will also do for me. Jesus himself said, if a son asks for bread, a father will not give him a stone.

How much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? We either believe these words or we don't. It's either true or it's a lie. And you and I know that these words are true.

I challenge you with everything that's in my heart today. We don't have 20 years to get this right. If we don't rise now as a church age, this is going to be a really unrecognizable land in the not too distant future.

We must, we must stand in the power of God now. I want to give an altar call this morning to those who hear this word and say, Lord Jesus Christ, I'm tired of being afraid of people. I'm tired of needing their applause and their approval.

But God, I need your love to speak. I can't do it without your power and I can't do it without your love. I'm asking you, Lord, to touch my life.

I'm asking you to give me your Holy Spirit. I'm asking you to perfect me in that love of Christ that will cast out all fear. We're going to stand in just a moment.

I'm going to ask the people who have a tendency to rush for their cars at this moment to please have enough respect to let people who want to respond to this altar to come first and then you rush for your car. I mean this sincerely. I believe it's disrespectful to crowd the aisles trying to get out of the house of God when people are trying to come to an altar.

As we stand, for those who hear this word today, we're going to worship for about 10 minutes or so. And for those who've heard this word and say, God Almighty, you're speaking right to my heart. You're speaking right to my situation.

I am so tired. I'm so tired of being silent in a perilous time. God, please give me your power and let the love of Christ be my motivation to open my mouth and speak the name of Jesus.

Would you please stand? And those who want to come, please just come. There's a point in the testimony of the Christian church when we just don't have time to argue doctrine any longer. That we all have the sense to recognize that we need the power of the Holy Spirit to stand up and do what we're called to do.

We have to call out to God to be in us what we could never hope to be in ourselves. You know that and I know that. I want to encourage you with everything in my heart today.

We're going to lift our hands and you talk to God and you tell Jesus what it is you're looking for his power for. What is it that you're hoping to accomplish? What is it that you feel that God would do through your life? What do you want to do with the power of God? Is it a legitimate purpose that you want freedom and the power of God for? Is it to consume on yourself or really is it for the purposes of God? Remember he said in James, you ask and you ask and miss because you ask to consume it on your own lust. And that's even the power of God.

Some people just want the power of God to get more applause. They want the power of God to have more favor with fallen people and to feel good about themselves along the journey. And he said, don't think you'll receive anything from the Lord.

That prayer won't be answered. But if you are willing to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel and to stand and be a preacher and a teacher to, in Paul's case, the Gentile world who knew nothing about God and were quite often hostile to the message. I don't know about you, but I just so want to make a difference in this generation.

I just so long for people to know and to feel what we feel today. I feel like the four lepers that went into the camp of the enemy and found the enemy was defeated and this great spoil was there. And suddenly one day they said, we do not well to keep this to ourselves.

People are starving in the city and we know where provision is. We know what the truth is. We know the enemy has been routed and gone.

And he's long ago fled into the wilderness. And all this great spoil is here. Why are we not going back to the city and telling the people that we found provision? Thank God.

That's why God used those four lepers, because they had that heart to go back. A lot of other people may not have gone back, but they went back. And that's, I think, why he's willing to use you and I, because in our in our weakness and struggle, the one thing we will do when the provision of God is given to us is we will tell others about it.

That's why I believe you've come. So would you just lift your hands to the Lord now? Father, God Almighty, we collectively come to you as the body of Christ. And I know people are online all over the country and even other countries of the world.

And Lord, we recognize this is the last hour of time. God, you promised through the prophet Joel that you would send your Holy Spirit, which you did on the day of Pentecost. But you also promised in the scriptures the latter house will be greater than the former.

God, we ask you in Jesus' name to fill us afresh and anew with your Holy Spirit and give us strength, oh God, and giftings that could only come from the hand of God. Compel us to speak, Lord. Compel us to make our lives into a compelling testimony in this generation.

Oh, God, we don't want to be just people who are just espousing a set of facts. But Lord, we have to be a vibrant living witness of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And so take us out of weakness and into strength.

Take us out of captivity and into freedom. Take us out of poverty and into the treasure of Christ within us. Take us out, Lord, of looking inward and help us to look to you, the source of our life and the source of our strength.

Oh, God, we say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless your spirit of God. We thank you, Lord, for taking us in our frailty and filling us, oh God, from the crown of our heads to the soles of our feet, raising us up to be a mighty army in this generation.

We're not content, Lord, just to be Christians in the house of God. We're not content, Lord, just to vocalize what we believe here. We're not content just to sing our songs around this altar.

Lord God, we want to be witnesses wherever we go. That's what your promise was to us. Lord, take us out of weakness and bring us into our inheritance.

Truly, we sit at the right hand of God in all victory. And Lord, so we ask you, Father, in Jesus' name. Set us at a table in the presence of our enemies and make our cups to overflow.

God, do it for the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah. Glory to the name of Jesus.

Glory to the name of Jesus. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, let your name be glorified. Jesus, Jesus in New York City, be glorified.

Be glorified, O God. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Father, we ask you to fill us and fill us again and fill us again and fill us again. And empower us, O God, with the life that you bought for us on the cross. You didn't die and raise from the dead so we could just be a mediocre witness sitting in some house somewhere.

No, no, no. You promised life and you promised it more abundantly. And you promised victory and you promised strength.

So Lord, we take you at your word today. And we come to the throne of God to find grace to help in our time of need. Open our mouths, O God.

Give us the power to speak. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Begin to pray. Just begin to pray. Just pray.

Just call out on God. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, mighty God. Thank you, Lord.

Father, we ask you to do something in New York City so profound, so powerful that the whole world will have to stop and take notice. Jesus, glorify your name. Glorify your name.

My God, my God, my God, glorify your name. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Lord, for taking us in our weakness. Thank you, God. Thank you, Lord, for calling us yours when we don't have it all together.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God, for being willing to walk with us and partner with us. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

Give him a shout of praise in this house this morning. Hallelujah.

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