

# Taking Back Your Song in the Night

by Carter Conlon

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*Complaining as a Christian can lead to doubt and unbelief about God's character and can cause you to find fault with people and God, but faith and trust in God's goodness and faithfulness are essential to overcoming complaining and finding contentment in God's plan.*

**Duration:** 20:45

**Scripture:** Exodus 14:21, Psalm 29:3

**Topics:** "Deliverance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing gratitude and praise to Jesus. They emphasize the importance of thanking and praising God. The speaker then shares a personal story about someone in their choir who lost their job on the same day as the 9/11 attacks. They highlight the belief that the steps of a righteous person are ordered by the Lord and that God's plans are being accomplished in every aspect of life. The speaker encourages listeners to trust in God's guidance and to see obstacles as opportunities for God's power to be manifested.

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## Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindell, Texas, 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Our message title tonight is Taking Back Your Song in the Night.

Taking Back Your Song in the Night. Now, Father, I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I thank you for your strength and for your power.

I thank you for the greatness of your love and grace, and God for your knowledge, because you know every heart, every life, every situation that is in this house tonight and that will hear this message in the coming days. I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to take me beyond my borders. I'm asking you, God, to give me thoughts that are yours, give me ways that are yours.

Lord, let this message glorify Jesus Christ. Let your kingdom come, let your church be established. Mighty God, let the powers of darkness be exposed and demolished.

Father, I just thank you for the freedom. I thank you, God, there's going to be a people that are going to go home and shout aloud upon their beds tonight. They're going to sing a song that the enemy has tried to take out of their hearts, out of their homes, and out of their lives.

But, God, we're not ignorant of the devil's devices. Lord, you're going to expose it tonight. You're going to give us back our song in the night.

Father, we thank you for it. We give you all the praise and all the glory. In Jesus' mighty name.

Amen. Psalm 77, verse 1 to 3. I cried to God with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, and my sore, or my pain, ran in the night and ceased not.

My soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

Beloved, Psalm 77 begins with a complaint, and it's really a psalm where the psalmist is bringing something back to mind. He was going through a difficult time, perhaps a time like all of us have to go through now and again. And he couldn't understand what it was he was going through.

And he began to complain. Webster's Dictionary defines complaining as this. I want to really lay this groundwork before getting into this message.

It's to utter an expression of grief. It's to lament. It's to utter an expression of resentment, to murmur or to find fault.

It means to utter expressions of uneasiness or pain, to charge, to accuse of an offense. It means to strike the hands or the chest as in extreme grief and drive forth with one's voice. To complain.

You know, to complain is human nature, isn't it? You notice you never have to teach a child how to complain. They come about it very naturally, right from the womb. It's our nature.

It's our fallen nature to complain. The moment we feel slighted, ignored, we feel overlooked, delayed, when somebody inconveniences us, and especially when they cut into our line, whether it's at the Lincoln Tunnel or at the Rite Aid Pharmacy, the very first thing out of our mouth quite often is a complaint. And if we feel that we're not properly treated, the very first thing we do is get on the telephone and we say, I'd like to complain.

Who can I speak to? It's amazing to see how complaining is in the human spirit. Find a public place, especially a place of commerce in New York City sometime, and if available, sit there and just listen to the people for a little while. And you'll see complaining is as natural as breathing.

The very first thing that comes out of most people's mouths almost all day are complaints and offenses, grievances. Now, the devil loves it when a Christian begins to complain. You see, because very often in his complaint there is a veiled accusation against God.

Really, that's what a spirit of complaining is all about, especially when it gets a hold of you in the house of God. Now, to complain as a Christian is to say to God that there is no divine plan, there is no divine purpose in what I'm facing. There is no profit to what you're asking me to go through.

Now, the Bible says that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. All things. Now, folks, that means when somebody cuts into your line in a department store when you're driving your car and something happens to the engine, irrespective of what it is that comes into your life.

I could go on with example after example. If we are Christians, the only time that we will really find true contentment in our walk with God is when we start to believe that all things really do work together for good. There is a divine purpose in everything that happens.

I remember one time I was driving in my car quite a few years ago. I had two other men in ministry with me and we were in the middle of nowhere in Canada and the engine went on my car. And I remember, I mean went, it literally just absolutely blew up.

I remember we're on the side of the road, we're in the middle of nowhere and we got out, we're standing by the car. Now, you have to understand, in Canada when you're in the middle of nowhere, you are really in the middle of nowhere. There are no people there.

There are sometimes very few cars that pass by. And I remember one pastor turned to me and he says, What are we going to do? And I looked at them and I said, Well, in the divine plan of God, everyone is somewhere and right now we are here. Now, they didn't find that very amusing.

It was me that was now without a vehicle. It happened in a little while that we were able to get that vehicle into a nearby town. We were able to get it into a garage that was there.

I walked into the office to find out if it was possible to somehow have that vehicle taken back to where we were going. And I walked in and I recognized the man who was the head of this particular organization that we walked into. I had seen him at Christian meetings quite a few years before and found out that he was a Christian who had been deeply wounded by something that happened in the house of God.

And because of it, he had fallen away from the Lord. And I was able to sit there in that office and talk to him and begin to infuse faith back into his heart again. Begin to talk to him about the faithfulness of God and the goodness of God and the fact that because things happen in our lives, it's not a peaches and cream walk when we come to Christ.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people. And I was able to begin to share with him and believe in God that my misfortune was prearranged as it is by God so that I could be in that office and speaking to that man that day. Beloved, all things work together for good.

There is a reason, there is a purpose for things that happen in the Christian life. We are the most blessed when we begin to understand that. When we begin to accept the things that God brings our way.

Whether we understand them or whether we don't understand them. That we can stand in the midst of adversity and say, My God, I believe that you are working something into my life for a purpose. You are doing something in me and through me that is going to glorify your name.

I don't understand it. And God, I don't necessarily like it. But I appreciate it because it comes from your hand.

And out of this, some good is going to come. Out of this, you're going to be glorified. Some life somewhere is going to be changed for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ.

The devil loves it when Christians begin to complain. We find the reason why in Psalm 77 verse 3, the psalmist said, I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. It was overwhelmed.

Oh folks, it was not too long ago. I've gone through a pretty rough year and a half. I guess you can say there's been tougher years.

But the last year and a half has been pretty tough. Starting with physical illness because of an exposure to a toxic substance. And then from there, two car accidents ending up with a broken bone in my back.

So there's been some pain along the way. I remember one Saturday night, I'd endured this for quite a while. Sitting on the platform, I could hardly breathe sometimes.

And the sweat would just pour down my face just trying to worship God, let alone get up and preach the gospel. And I remember one Saturday night, I was at home and I was standing in my kitchen. And I was trying to finish a message that I was working on for Sunday morning.

And I was coughing and coughing and coughing. I could never bring this fluid out of my lungs that was always forming there. And always making it so difficult to breathe.

And I leaned over the sink and I was coughing. And I had my head leaned against the covers in the sink. And it was as if it was the moment the devil was waiting for.

Up to that point, I had just accepted everything. That God had brought into my life. And it just seemed at that particular moment, I was overwhelmed.

And I said something. I said to my wife, Teresa, I don't think I can live like this anymore. And it's as if hell itself was waiting for me to say those words.

Because I tell you, from that moment, I uttered those words. It's like a blackness began to envelop me. A despair.

I began to wonder what I was going to do in my future. And how I was going to provide for my family. And all of the doubt and unbelief now started to want to grip my heart.

And I had to fight hell just to go on week after week. I had to fight hell to stand in this pulpit and preach the gospel. Because of my spirit.

The psalmist said I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. There's a darkness that can envelop you when you begin to complain. You see, the devil's plan has always been to overwhelm you by causing you to look at your circumstances.

And when we begin to look at our circumstances, we lose faith and focus. And he succeeds in infusing us with doubt and unbelief. And ultimately, even an unbelief about the integrity of God.

In Psalm 77, listen to what the psalmist says in his complaint. He said, will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be unfavorable no more? Listen to the accusations in his heart against the very character of God. Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercy? Have you ever been there? Have you ever gone through this? Have you ever come to the point as a Christian where you've complained against God and you feel like somehow, somehow you've stepped out of divine favor? Somehow God's mercy is for everyone else but for you? Somehow His promises to you have failed? Somehow He's forgotten to be gracious? To shut up His tender mercy? All because a complaint has gotten into your heart.

And the devil begins now. The moment we begin to complain against God, the devil will come and infuse you with doubt about the very character and integrity of God. That's what he's after.

If he can get that, he can get you. If he can cause you to believe that somehow God has withdrawn His hand, somehow God is unrighteous in what you're going through, somehow God is unfaithful to you and God's mercy has failed. He can take you out of the very will and the very plan of God for your life.

The devil loves to convince people that our circumstances and not God hold all the keys to our future. I remind you in Numbers chapter 13 in the Old Testament, if you go there very quickly, now this is a very familiar story so I'm not going to dwell on it, but the satanic strategy against God's people has always been the same and it's always been totally effective. Now in Numbers chapter 13, verse 32, you remember the spies that Moses sent in to look at the Promised Land.

They came back and they brought a report. Numbers 13, verse 32, it says, They brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw on it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Now this is the satanic strategy to get you to look at the circumstances and cause you and I to believe that our circumstances and not God hold the key to our future. They came back initially and said, Yes, the land is everything that God says it is, a land flowing with milk and honey. And it's like the man or woman who opens the Bible and looks at the promises of God and says, Yes, it's true, it's all in here.

There is absolute life, there's abundant life in here. There is full life in this Bible. And Christ did redeem a people for Himself to be called by His name, through which He would be glorified.

But there are giants that we have to face, and they are so large and we are so small. And you can see Satan himself there just now beginning, as this report is getting into the hearts of people, just beginning to infuse in them this doubt and unbelief that's going to lead them to complain against God. And verse 14 says, All the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and all the people wept that night.

And the children of Israel murmured against Moses. Here's the complaining spirit now beginning to get a hold of them. They murmured against Moses and against Aaron.

And the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness? And wherefore has the Lord brought us unto this land to fall by this sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return unto Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain and let us return unto Egypt. Now let me show you

now the three stages of a complaining spirit. Number one, when a complaining spirit gets a hold of a child of God, the very first thing that begins to happen is you begin to find fault with people around you.

Listen now, the very first thing says, All the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron. They began to murmur against people.

Folks, if a complaining spirit is getting a hold of you, step number one, you are beginning to find fault with people all around you. You are no longer walking in the love of God. You are looking and seeing the negative in everyone.

You don't see the Christ in people anymore. You don't understand anymore that we are all weak and we are all pilgrims on a journey. We all need God.

We all need the blood of Jesus Christ. We all need the power of the Holy Ghost. We are all imperfect vessels.

Our only perfection is in Christ. Our only hope is in Christ. Our only strength is in Christ.

A complaining spirit will cause you to begin to murmur against people around you. That is the very first thing that happened with the children of Israel. And secondly, a complaining spirit caused them to now find fault with God.

Folks, if you are going to find fault with God's people, it is true that if it is not dealt with, you will begin eventually to find fault with God Almighty Himself. And wherefore, verse 3, has the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey, were it not better for us to return into Egypt. And lastly, a complaining spirit, when it is not dealt with, will cause the people of God to go back to misery again.

Can you imagine? Coming to Christ and just simply being unwilling to accept the lot that God has brought into your life. Complaining against God. Complaining against His people.

Complaining against His integrity. And forming an alliance with other people saying, let us go back again to bondage. Let us go back again to misery.

As if there was any hope there. That voice that says, you were better off before you became a Christian. You became a Christian, look at all the trouble that came into your life.

You were better off. Oh, the devil will plant that lie in every true child of God. Because he is a liar.

You are better off. Remember the despair. Remember the hopelessness.

Remember the suicidal tendencies. Remember the darkness. Remember the fact that you had no hope.

That is why you were moved upon, as it is, to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ when light finally came into your soul, because there was no hope back there. Jude, the writer in the New Testament, in his book in verse 16, he defines those who are misled. Now, he is talking about misled leaders in the body of Jesus Christ who in turn mislead others.

But he defines them as murmurers and complainers. I had never noticed that before. I have read Jude quite a few times.

And I understood that they are clouds without water. They speak evil of dignities. They rail on things that they do not understand.

All of the things that Jude says, all of the warnings. But I had never seen before that they have a complaining spirit, which the inference here, as I see it, now seems to be that they have a deep and unresolved grievance against the ways of God. The ways of God, perhaps, that they have outrightly rejected, as Judas did, looking at the ways of Christ and saying, Listen, I am not interested in serving.

I am not interested in yielding. I am not interested in giving my life for others. I am interested in being blessed.

I am interested in having my self-image propped up as it is. And perhaps they have outrightly rejected. They have a grievance against the ways of God.

They have outrightly rejected His claim upon their life. Or perhaps there are ways that they are unwilling to grasp or unable to wait until His purpose and plan are revealed. Peter tells us in 2 Peter 2.19 that they promise liberty, but they can only lead others into the same corruption.

That they themselves are slaves to. Jude says that they speak great swelling words in public, but what they think and speak at home in private are different. He said they hold men's persons in admiration.

Folks, I want to tell you something. It's not what we speak or sing or pray in public, but it's what we speak at home or in private that marks us to be what we truly are or what we're becoming. Any one of us can stand here and preach a good sermon to you, or the choir can get up and sing a good song, or the orchestra can play a good tune.

And people can, because of advantage, perhaps of talent, even God-given talent, people can stand in admiration. But that's not really what a man is. He's not defined by his talent.

A woman is not defined by their talent. We're defined by the confession that is in our hearts when we're outside.

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