

The Final Pleading of Conscience

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the urgent need for individuals and society to heed the final pleading of conscience and return to God's mercy amidst moral decline.

Duration: 41:34

Scripture: Proverbs 7:1

Topics: "Moral Accountability", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

The sermon from Proverbs chapter 7 titled 'The Final Pleading of Conscience' discusses the seduction of personal pleasure and leisure, warning against pursuing worldly desires over God's wisdom. It emphasizes the need for a moment of conscience and a decision to turn back to God before it's too late, highlighting the importance of prayer, standing up for righteousness, and being a living witness of God's truth in a society on a destructive path. The call is to choose to serve the Lord and be part of the spiritual battle for the souls of men.

Transcript

Now if you'll turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs chapter 7. I want to share with you a message that's entitled The Final Pleading of Conscience. Now I'm going to be reading this chapter and other portions of Proverbs. We're going to be in Proverbs the whole time.

In this context, Proverbs chapter 7 speaks about a seduction. And there's two ways you can look at this particular chapter. Because if you look at it in the way that God was giving it to Solomon, who wrote it down, calling him my son.

Solomon had a physical weakness for personal pleasure. That was part of the seduction. But the secondary part of that seduction was that with his weakness for personal leisure and pleasure.

And you read about that in Ecclesiastes. That definitely was the weakness of his life. It brought with it a spiritual seduction.

And I want you to read it with me in that context. When people begin to gravitate towards pleasure, in all of its facets, whether it's just leisure. Remember Solomon just set out to, in Ecclesiastes he said, I set out to find what makes men happy.

Which is ironic because he was given the guardianship of the actual physical presence of God on the earth at that time. The manifested physical presence was in the temple. And he knew everything about that temple.

But in his heart, he just, this question, I've shared on it before in this church, I said he left the answer to pursue the question. And he left it because of the lust of his own heart. It happens to churches.

It happens to cultures. It happens to countries. Where we actually have the answer and we know what the answer is.

But because of that, that inherent weakness in the human heart to pursue what we think will make us happy. We leave the answer and we begin to pursue a question. That's what Solomon did.

That's what America has done. Probably in the last 50 or more years. We've been on a gradual slide, spiritually and morally.

And now we're at the time where we're in the final pleading of conscience. And so pray with me that God have his way today and this word be spoken clearly to all of our hearts, mine and yours and anybody online or live today that's listening to us. Father, I thank you, Lord, with all my heart for the knowledge in our hearts that you are a God of mercy.

For if you weren't, we would have no hope now. If you weren't, darkness would swallow us, swallow the nation, swallow our testimony. If you weren't, you wouldn't be the one who said when the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord will raise a standard against it.

And so, Lord, we appeal to your mercy. We see your mercy on the cross. We hear it in your words.

We discern it in your character. And God, we appeal to mercy today and we ask you, Lord, to speak to our hearts. Each of us, Lord, speak clearly, powerfully.

Give us a sense of our purpose on the earth now, especially now. Help us, Lord, to draw away from what makes us weak and draw towards again the strength that you are willing to give to us. I ask you to overshadow the frailty of this human vessel as I bring forth your word and let your thoughts become mine.

Let your heart be mine. Let your voice be mine. I simply offer myself as a vessel in your hand that you can use.

Lord, you and I both know that you have to multiply the frailty of this vessel. So I thank you, God, for your mercy. Thank you, Lord, for the willingness that you have to one more time breathe on us, whether we deserve it or not.

Thank you for your mercy. In Jesus' name. Proverbs chapter 7, we'll be reading this passage of scripture in the context of what I have just spoken to you of the proper way to actually see it.

My son, keep my words and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live and my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Say to wisdom, you're my sister and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. Now, you remember the history of Solomon is that he made allegiances with foreign nations for his protection, the protection of Israel at that

time as he saw it. And part of the procedure of making allegiances with foreign kings is that as they would give you one of the women of their family to marry, to make you a blood relative technically.

But with these women, he thought it was going to bring protection. And what it brought him to is a place where not only was he seduced by his own fear and his own lust, but he was seduced by the religious words that these women brought with them. For at the window of my house, I looked through my lattice.

Remember God speaking to Solomon and saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, a man, a young man devoid of understanding, passing along the street near her corner. And he took the path to her house in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. And there a woman met him with the attire of a harlot and a crafty heart.

She was loud and rebellious. Her feet would not stay at home. At times she was outside, at times in the open square.

You might say she was also in Times Square, lurking at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him. And with an impudent face, she said to him, I have peace offerings with me.

In other words, there's a religion involved with me. May I put it that way? Peace offerings was that which you took to God to make a sense of wrong right. Today I've paid my vows.

So I came out to meet you diligently to seek your face and I've found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry, colored carvings of Egyptian linen. I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning. Let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home.

He's gone on a long journey. He's taken a bag of money with him and will come home on the appointed day. With her enticing speech, she caused him to yield and with her flattering lips, she seduced him.

Immediately went after her as an ox goes to the slaughter, as a fool to the correction of the stocks till an arrow struck his liver. And as a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would cost his life. Remember the end of Solomon's life, vanity, vanity, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Now, therefore, listen to me, my children, pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways. Do not stray in her paths for she's cast down many wounded.

All who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death. I want to share with you a parable.

I felt the Lord speaking to my heart along the context of this book in Proverbs. It's a parable about a man leaving that which had proven to be the source of his stability and that which history had always recorded would be the sense of life being fulfilled on this earth. God had given him a wife and God had given him children.

There's something in the human heart that even though it's what God has provided, it's decreed, it's written, it's established, it has a history, it's known, even though he knows that this is the route to the blessing of God and the happiness that God provides, he allows himself to be seduced by an affair which is causing him to be led by his own carnal senses. This affair is offering him pleasure without responsibility. And isn't that what the predominant theology of America has done for the last 20 years?

Offered pleasure, but no responsibility with it.

Offered to satisfy the senses, offered to make us everything other than what God says would bring us into a place of fulfillment, causing him to yield to the delusion that he's leaving hopelessness for delight. When in reality, he's leaving what ultimately would bring delight to his soul for hopelessness. At dusk, as he prepares to leave everything behind him for good, he stops for just a moment, and I can picture this man in my mind, and he stops outside the doorway of his home to the final pleading of his conscience to turn around.

He has charted a course for his future that is going to produce heartache, it's going to produce children with sorrow, it's going to produce a deep abiding sorrow in his own heart, he's going to lose everything. He has no idea that the seduction he's fallen under is after his life. He has no idea.

Even though history records that others who have followed in these footsteps have paid a terrible price for it in the long run, he still makes the decision to go in this direction. But there's a moment, and this is what I want to talk about this morning, there's a moment where he stops just for a moment. And if anybody here has ever done something you shouldn't do, and you know you shouldn't do it, you know that moment comes.

It's a moment, it might be a fleeting moment for others, it might be a more extended moment, but it's a moment where you stop and say, should I be doing this? And will it really satisfy me? And what will it produce in the end? And this is where we are as a nation today in America. We're at this moment where our conscience, we're at the final pleading of conscience, the last moment where we can turn around. If we wait another five years it's going to be too late.

If we move towards godlessness the time will pass. Solomon couldn't foresee when he wrote these words what it was going to bring to the nation of Israel. He didn't foresee Rome coming in and ransacking and destroying the temple.

Couldn't have heard the screams and cries of what what he thought and others thought could never be triumphed over. Suffering such indignity, bringing such shame to the name of the god that he purported to serve. He never could have seen it.

America is pursuing an illusion, an illusion that we can forsake god, we can cast off the restraints on all of our behaviors, we can pursue our own lusts and still have a utopian end when this is all over. A seductive spirit, verse 14 says, I have peace offerings with me and today I've paid my vows. It's a seductive spirit that promotes the indulgence of self and claims that peace and satisfaction will be the end result, even claims to offer peace with god.

I'm telling you this whole society is sick. As Isaiah once said about his own people Israel from the top to the bottom, it's sick and it's sick because we've forsaken a living relationship with god. We have pursued a seductive spirit that has allowed the people of this nation, even in the house of god, to indulge ourselves when the whole call of the gospel and the cross of Christ is not about ourselves, it's about living for the benefit of others.

That is the call of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verse 15 says, so I came out to meet you diligently to seek your face and I found you and I spread my bed with tapestry colored coverings of Egyptian linen. It's amazing.

The seductive spirit uses an illustration that promotes the attributes of other failed societies, extolling the virtues of the godless while hiding the already revealed bankruptcy of what they once considered strength. It's interesting that this seductive spirit invokes linen from a society that every child of God should have known would lead them back into captivity and subject them to bondage if it could. Come home with me, get in bed with me, the seduction says, and we'll be covered by Egyptian linen.

Every child of God should know what Egypt had done, the things of this world, and what the world would do. And it was a grave mistake when the church of Jesus Christ theologically got in bed with the thinking of this world and said to the thinking of this world, cover us, cover us with the same love of gold, cover us with the same lust for power, cover us with the same desire to be socially accepted and to be at the top and not at the bottom, cover us to be other than what our Christ is and what our Christ told us we would be. If they have called the master of the house beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household? He also said, woe to them that the world speaks well of, for so did their fathers of the false prophets.

Being covered by a society that was once judged by God, its power was drowned in the arrogance of its own pursuits. Verse 18 to 20 says, come let us take our fill of love until the morning, let us delight ourselves with love for my husband is not at home, he's gone on a long journey, he's taken a bag of money with him and will come home on the appointed day. It's an illusion that our new love of ourselves will delight and satisfy and that somehow we can forget God, he's gone far far away, his word no longer applies, there's nothing to fear, you don't have to worry about what the red letters in your bible say anymore.

No, we can forget God without any consequence. That's exactly what she was saying, that's what this religious and secular seductive spirit says. Oh, where's the promise of his coming? All things remain as they always have been, don't worry about him, this is all about us, you and I just now, don't worry about him coming back, put away the day of his return, but what a surprise it's going to be my friend, because when we don't expect it, in a moment there's a twinkling of an eye the trump of God is going to sound, the dead in Christ are going to be raised and we, we who are alive and remain, shall be gathered together with them.

He had no idea that this seductive spirit was after his life, with her enticing speech he caused him to yield, with her flattering lips he seduced him, immediately went after her as an ox goes to the slaughter or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till an arrow struck his liver and a bird, as a bird hastens to the snare and he did not know it would cost his life, he didn't know that this seductive spirit was after his future, was after his children, was after his family, was after his security, was after his hope and ultimately was after his relationship with God, was after his influence for good in the earth, he didn't know that that's what this seductive spirit was after and I got to tell you folks, we are in a mess, we're in a social, political, economic and spiritual mess in

this nation right now, but as I was praying this morning, oh God, oh God, I was here last night in an empty sanctuary praying, oh God, all that's left in my heart is to appeal to your mercy because you're a God of mercy, God is good and his mercy endures forever, I see mercy in the cross, I see mercy all through the scriptures, I see Jonah going to Nineveh who are violent, vile, godless, angry, evil and you're sending one man and brought a whole society into a moment of reprieve, they were eventually judged but they had a moment of reprieve where men, women and children were given a chance to turn to God, I see mercy throughout history as I read the testimony after testimony of nations and societies that have fallen into

such debauchery, I see England where people are drunk and

fornicating in the streets and God sends John Wesley and George Whitfield and raises up a voice one more time in the nation because God is a God of mercy, you ask yourself today, you say as I do, I can see what's happening but what can I do, what possible difference can my life make to stop this destructive course that so many seem to be set upon, if we go into the next chapter in Proverbs, it gives us the answer because the whole chapter of seven is about the seduction, chapter eight is about what can be sent to counter this seduction, does not wisdom cry out and understanding lift up her voice, here's what you can do, cry out, pray, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their

sin and I will heal their land, Jesus shared a story in Luke chapter 11 about a man who at the midnight hour realized he didn't have enough to give to the need that was around him and had presented itself before him and so he went to the door of a man who in this parable was already in bed, tucked in with his children, his day was already done and he started knocking on that door and even though the man said I wouldn't get up, it was too late to get up, he said but for his insistence, for his unwillingness to go away, for that cry that was in his voice, I have a friend that's come to my house, I don't have enough to give him but I know that you have all the bread that I need, I know you have everything, you have the fullness of supply, you have the compassion, you have the courage, you

have the power, you have the provision, you have everything I need and so he cried and that's why the prayer meeting is so important now, prayer meeting is not just something we do now on Tuesday night again Proverbs chapter 8 verse 2, it says she takes her stand on the top of the high hill beside the way where the paths meet, she takes her stand Proverbs 1 20 says it this way, wisdom calls aloud outside, she raises her voice in the open squares she cries out in the chief concourses at the openings of the gates in the city, she speaks her words, how long you simple ones will you love simplicity, for scorners delighting their scorning and fools hate knowledge, turn at my rebuke, surely I will pour out my spirit on you I will make my words known, it is so important now that you and I stand

up that we begin to pray first but we take our stand and we resolve in our heart you and I that I'm not going to draw back into silence at this time I'm going to stand where the paths meet as it says in Proverbs 1 I'm going to stand in that place where this person, my neighbor is standing in a place of indecision when this final pang of conscience has come upon you and I'm going to stand and I'm going to plead don't walk in your own knowledge, don't do things your own way, don't think it's going to bring you to a desired end, God says that if you will turn to him he will give you his holy spirit you will be saved, you will be turned into another man, another woman, you'll be given power, you'll be given grace that can't come from any measure of human effort, you'll be made into the person

that God destined you to be and you'll be brought to a place where your life will count for his glory you'll be given a song in your heart that doesn't come from the earth it comes from heaven you'll be given light in your eyes that no amount of the lights in time square can produce you'll be given determination, giftings, wisdom, words, abilities that only could come from God if you will turn to him he will pour out his spirit upon you I want to read to you a letter an email that I received yesterday from a pastor and the pastor's assistant in Paris whose church is on the block where these killings just took place it's from a young lady called Catrion who's his assistant dear pastors Teresa and Carter Conlon I write on behalf of pastor Frank La Filiatra who asked me if I would kindly

share the below letter with you and ask if you could read it to your church and ask for your prayers I would personally add in my own name but I am sure he would agree that we have not known greater inspiration in prayer life than your church and we have spent the last two years seeking to grow in prayer as a body inspired by your testimony so I believe this request is far beyond the right thing to ask for we have never felt this need in a more realistic and stronger way your prayers are gold to us this is from the pastor himself dear brothers and sisters in Christ this is to you tragically for the second time in less than a year Paris has been plunged into bloodshed because of Islamist terrorism even though the people remain courageous and united our whole country is in shock and

profoundly scared our church finds itself at the very heart of this tragedy the neighborhood of Bastille where we have been established for over 40 years is that where the shootings targeting Charlie Hebdo, the Bataclan and the restaurants took place we are especially affected by the tragedy which happened in the Bataclan's concert hall as it is there so close to our church that we held two conferences with pastors Carter and Teresa Conlon and Claude Hood in 2014 and with Nikki Cruz this year last Friday evening we were holding a prayers night in our church building the room was packed for several weeks now we have begun feeling a wave of the spirit rising up powerful visitations of God people giving their lives to God healings deliverances at almost every meeting in the middle of the

horror God is preparing a powerful visitation for this country and we are ready to rise up to the challenge whatever the price may be we thank you for your marks of affection and for lifting up France and Paris in your prayers to the Lord you know folks if we ask ourselves a question is our prayer meeting having any effect is there anybody out there listening from the 161 countries that are becoming part of the worldwide prayer meeting here on Tuesday night well here's an example of people who've been stirred inspired strengthened finding themselves in the very middle of hell at this particular moment but standing up and I love the words of this pastor prepared prepared to meet the challenge whatever the price may be prepared to meet the challenge pastor Frank I want to tell you this

morning that your words have challenged me and in prayer just recently I've repeated the words of your letter and I pray God that we are prepared here in New York City to meet the challenge as well whatever the price may be it's time for the church of Jesus Christ to take a stand it's time for us to rise up it's time for us to pray it's time for us to choose what we're going to follow are we going to follow the seductive spirit that just uses God for itself or are we going to stand up for people that face the danger in ours and the future generations of heading into eternity without God into a place called hell and everything that means which is so staggering our minds can't even begin to comprehend it I'm simply not willing that they should go there and it is going to be a cost we are

living in a hostile society to the gospel of Jesus Christ I understand that but the scripture says cry out lift up your voice take your stand at the top of the high hill not the bottom take your stand in a visible place take your stand where it can be seen and it can be heard challenge and encourage people to do right you don't have to be shouting like I am this morning you can do it in a soft voice remember God brought Elijah out of despair and sent him on the right path with a soft voice but it's imperative that you and I say something now and thirdly again in Proverbs 8 3 and 4 it says he cries out by the gates at the entry of the city at the entrance of the doors to you all men I call and my voice is to the sons of men it's one thing to pray it's a second thing to stand but the third

part of this is to be a witness of the truth a physical witness of the truth a witness that is not chosen the easy way but God's way a witness of the power of God that he's willing to give everyone who turns to him

in truth in other words it's like saying to somebody instead of telling you about God let me show you who God is let my life be a demonstration of his love his compassion his wisdom his power and he's not willing to withhold that's why he said in Luke 11 I say do you ask it shall be given you seek you shall find knock and it shall be open everyone who asks receives he who seeks shall find to everyone who knocks it shall be open if you know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly father give the holy spirit to those who ask but we have to ask for

the right reason I want your holy spirit so that you might be glorified I want your holy spirit oh God so that you would give me the ability to turn men and women away from this insane path of self-delusion to the path that leads to the cross that leads to eternal life I'm tired of cowardice I'm tired of self-focus I'm tired of thinking and talking about myself God help me to follow the one who said not my will but thine be done help me Lord Jesus Christ help me to pray you realize our prayer meeting has strengthened this group of believers in Paris on that street where these killings took place some people wonder is anything happening that's only one people are wanting to pray they're wanting to gather take a stand and be a living witness just a living witness of who God is because all

else is going to fail everything else is a delusion we're all on borrowed time now folks but we have a moment of conscience I don't know how else I can say this but I plead with anybody who can hear we have a moment of conscience fairly soon the conscience of this nation will be seared but we're living in just a moment when people are saying what's happening to our children why the violence in our schools what's going on in our colleges what's happening to our families why are we so aimless as a nation what's happening to to everything in the foundation of this country in particular that made this nation great not greater but great among the nations what have we forsaken especially as we approach Christmas time I believe many many people many people are going to be looking just a moment

God what are we leaving behind us what are we evolving into as a society and if we don't stop this course what will it look like at the end I know it offers this euphoric idea of a new order but is it really euphoric and is it really new is it not has it not been seen before in the world is are there not lessons of history that tell us that this trajectory is disastrous that we're on why can't we learn from history it's so important now that the church not be silent our voices must be heard it doesn't matter the price our voices must be heard now because I believe in my heart we could have one more awakening by awakening I mean just people just suddenly like the prodigal son they just suddenly come to themselves and say what am I doing here I'm in a field eating with pigs and my father

has more than enough bread to spare in his house I'm getting up and I'm going home and for anybody in this country that's going to hear this message in the days ahead my word to you is simple get up and go home get up and go back to God get up and go back to prayer get up get up and read this bible again just get up and go back hallelujah we have a moment of mercy we have a moment of conscience we're on the threshold now I know in my heart that we're going to decide in the next four or five years which way we're going to go we're going to have a moment of reflection that will either lead us to a place where there'll be healing and restoration and a marvelous shout of praise to God in these last days or there will be bitter cries desires for vengeance confusion hopelessness and anger and

looking for somebody to blame for the mess choose this day joshua said choose this day whom you're going to serve but as for me in my house we will serve the lord we will and we're going to stand in just a moment my altar call is real simple as the body of christ after hearing this kind of a word you can only reach two conclusions i'm in or i'm out now some of you are already in but some are right in the middle

and you're in that valley decision you're not sure you're not sure do i really want to pray with passion and power do i do i really want to stand do i really want to be a living testimony of who god is for the sake of others not for myself but for others if that's your heart he will give you what you need he will become your source of strength and supply and it's to these people

that i speak today it's a hard decision to make i'm not going to suggest it's easy nobody wants to be vilified lose their freedom whatever it's going to involve but the time has come for the church to be the church again the time has come for you and i to hit the upper room on tuesday night and say god almighty i give my life for you for your purposes you've saved me thank you for that but i yield my life now for your purposes on the earth through me yes you struggle yes you're fearful we all are but he can become the source of your strength he can be every resource he can be your supply your direction your courage some that are here this morning you'll find yourself speaking with courage you never knew you had because you didn't have it you put it in your heart you put in that perfect

love for people that cast out the fear of their rejection oh god help us oh god help us we are the only hope now for the nation folks god help us to heed the call to stand up to be counted and if that's the your heart today and you can be among those of us who say i've i've been on the fence in this but by god's grace i'm going in by god's grace count me in this is a war for the souls of men and i am not willing to sit on the sidelines but i recognize that i will need everything that god has for me i'll need the armor the equipment the training i can't do this in my own strength but i'm in and if that's the cry of your heart today i want to open the front of this auditorium the space between the screens in the annex and north jersey as well at the front of the auditorium and for those

that are listening online and part of this fellowship we love you we thank god for you you get to stand up in your living room wherever you are and say pastor by the grace of god i'm in by the grace of god i will take my stand i will pray and trust god to be a living witness if that's the cry of your heart let's stand together just make your way here and we'll pray together please balcony go to either exit the main sanctuary just slip out we're going to worship for 10 minutes then we're going to pray together please don't block the aisles for those that are trying to come down just slide out take your stand for god today you say today what's in this for me him jesus christ is what's in this for you today his passion his power his purpose everything of christ is yours in his name amen paul

said to timothy fight this fight as a good soldier of christ and no man that wars and tangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who's chosen him to be a soldier it doesn't mean you we don't work it doesn't mean we don't interrelate it doesn't mean we don't have bills to pay it just means that that doesn't become our whole focus our focus is on the kingdom of god the souls of other people i'm going to ask andrew if you will to just on your trumpet play amazing grace and as he plays it make the choice in your heart i know you have already and many in the sanctuary already have like i'm in god i'm in i'm in you've saved me it's now about others you've saved me and now give me the strength i need to be all that you've called me to be father i thank you lord for this

time together and this is a solemn assembly today and often in the scriptures you would call a solemn assembly when there was something profound happening and needed in the nation this is a solemn assembly this morning we can't clap our hands and shout hooray as if the we've already won for we're just entering into the battle that's ahead of us but god soberly and righteously help us to make the choices we need to make now and to be able to hear your promises to us give us ears of faith to be able to hear the things that you are willing to do through us if we will let you do it give us courage to go through every door

you call us to go through individually collectively give us love lord and our voices that will compel others to come into the house of god deliver us lord from delusion from

self-seeking give us a heart lord that that heart that sent you to a cross for us give us that same heart that will cause us lord to yield to you for the sake of others help us lord to recognize the high calling that you've placed on each of our lives help us to fight for our children lord help us god help us lord in jesus name

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