

# The Final Warning Comes in Pictures

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon warns of the dangers of spiritual complacency and the necessity of heeding God's vivid warnings through the prophet Ezekiel's message.*

**Duration:** 45:28

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 12:1-4, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Warning"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by acknowledging that society is often consumed by trivial matters, like soap operas, while ignoring the impending dangers and warnings around them. He draws a parallel between the current state of society and the description of God's people in Ezekiel 16 before they faced divine justice. The preacher suggests that God may be showing us a picture of what we have become as a nation. He then highlights the importance of having a personal relationship with God and being able to hear from Him in the midst of storms. The preacher also emphasizes the wisdom and understanding that God has given to societies, like America, and warns against becoming prideful and relying solely on human wisdom. He references verses from the Bible, such as Ezekiel 16 and Acts 27, to support his points.

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## Transcript

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This recording cannot be posted on any website. However, written permission to link to the Times Square Church homepage may be requested by emailing info at [timessquarechurch.org](mailto:timessquarechurch.org). Other recordings are available by calling 1-800-488-0854 or by writing to Times Square Church Tape Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, New York, 10019. Ezekiel chapter 12, the title of my message this morning is The Final Warning Comes in Pictures.

The Final Warning Comes in Pictures. Now, Father, I come before you as an oracle of God. I know I have your word.

You've spoken to my heart. I ask you to give me the grace to be able to speak this in a manner that all who are present can hear it. God, keep our hearts open to truth.

Father, I pray for the tenderness and the clarity of thought that you take me far beyond any natural ability and bring me into that supernatural ability of the Holy Spirit. Expand my mind and my heart. Expand our hearts in this sanctuary to be able to hear what it is that you're speaking to your church.

Give us the grace to hear this and greater grace to live it. I ask it in Jesus' name. Ezekiel chapter 12, beginning at verse 1. The word of the Lord also came unto me, saying, Now, son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see and see not, they have ears to hear and hear not, for they are a rebellious house.

Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight. And thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight. It may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.

Now, the Lord is saying to Ezekiel, the time has come when the people of God in his generation, they can't hear the word anymore. They've so hardened their hearts that they're not willing to listen. So, the Lord says, I'm going to do through you, Ezekiel, I'm going to give them a picture.

And I'm going to move you, as it is, in their sight from one place to another place. Thou shalt, then, verse 4 says, Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing, and thou shalt go forth it even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity. Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.

In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight. Thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground, for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel. The final warning comes in pictures.

Now, Ezekiel the prophet was called to ministry in one of the darkest times, commentators say, in Old Testament history. He had to prophesy to the people of God seven years before the final destruction in 586 B.C. of the Old Testament temple and the city of Jerusalem, and the 15 years after, in captivity. The people of Ezekiel's time were stubborn.

Many of God's people still lived in Jerusalem, and the ones who lived in Jerusalem refused to believe that the final destruction was coming. They did not believe that they would ever be captivated, in spite of their careless treating of the things of God. They were very careless, nonchalant about the things of God.

You can envision the society coming into the temple, buying their lambs and buying their goats, and having their sacrifices performed, but it's all become ritual. There's really very little in the heart to love God anymore, to want to obey Him. They've been intermixed now with the peoples of other nations that have gathered around, and folks, when the glory of God is in a place, people will gather to that glory, and it will go one of two ways.

God's people will have an influence on the nations, or the nations will have an influence on God's people. But that mutual interaction will never stand in a still place. It will always be moving in one direction or another.

And so Ezekiel was in a difficult place. He was taken in the second deportation into Babylon. A third was coming, and he's in a position where the Holy Spirit is showing him the destruction that's coming to Jerusalem.

And no doubt the word that he is prophesying is being translated as it is over there, but the people are just hard. They're not hearing anymore. And the people on the captivity side are listening to the voices of false prophets.

Now, folks, the one sure sign that judgment is at the door is the rise of the eternal good time prophet. You can set your watch by it. When you see a rise in these voices, you know that the justice of God is right at the door.

The good time prophets were still in Jerusalem, and some of them even who had been deported are now in Babylon, and they're still prophesying that good times are still coming, that the captivity is going to be very short, just a couple of months or at most a few months, and then we're going to be leaving, and we're going to go right back to all our blessing and prosperity that we've known. Ezekiel is speaking now for God to these people about the duration of the captivity. The captivity is going to be fairly longstanding.

As Jeremiah had said, it was going to be 70 years in captivity, and the destruction of what had purported to be a place of worship was going to be virtually total but not complete because God, through Ezekiel, was about to reveal that he will always have a testimony, and he was going to bring back a people one day that were going to rebuild. Of course, we know that happened in the future under Ezra and Nehemiah and such like. Now, I believe that God's own people had become much similar in appearance to the societies which were around them, and the societies around them were soon going to know the justice of God.

Ezekiel, in his message, he's back in Jerusalem in the spirit. He's speaking to the captives in Babylon, and then he's also speaking to surrounding nations, some of whom had an inner delight that God's testimony had come into trouble, and because of that, they themselves were going to be judged. And others are nations that had captivated the people of God, and they had become very similar to them.

And I can see Ezekiel sitting there, and he's prophesying as it is in the spirit about these nations, hoping beyond hope that perhaps some of God's people would begin to see what had brought them into difficulty and how they had become in spirit very much like the nations around them that were coming under the judgment of God. For example, in Ezekiel chapter 27, he speaks about a particular... it was a Phoenician, Syro-Phoenician merchant city called Tyre or Tyrus, and there was a judgment of God coming on this city for specific reasons. Now, you're going to have to follow with very closeness to understand where it is that I'm going.

Now, the word of the Lord, chapter 27, verse 1, came again to me saying, Now thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus, and say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situated in the entry of the sea, you're a merchant of the people for many isles. Thus saith the Lord God, O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Now, he's speaking to this merchant city that became a source of prosperity for many nations.

Verse 4, he says, Your borders are in the midst of the seas, and your builders have perfected your beauty. In other words, perhaps visitors from other nations coming to this city would walk around, and they'd see magnificent architecture. There was a wisdom and an ability to do things which, if men had been truly wise in that generation, would have acknowledged that all of this wisdom and ability comes from God in the first place.

Verse 5 says, They've made all thy ships, shipboards, and fir trees of Sennair. They've taken cedars from Lebanon to make masks for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars.

The company of the Asherites have made thy benches of ivory, and brought thee out of the isles of Chittim. Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail. Blue and purple from the isles of Elisha was that which covered thee.

Now, you see, if you follow this, the Lord is saying through Ezekiel to this nation, Tyrus, this merchant city, you became a very prosperous city, and through you many nations of the world began to prosper. You had the ability to do things, and there were within you wise men who knew how to build. You built fine sailing ships, and as the ships left the harbor, there were incredibly colored, it must have been an incredible thing to see these merchant ships leaving, and the colored sails as it is, and people would stand back and look in awe, and say how has this nation, this particular city become so blessed that they can do these things.

In verse 8 it says, The inhabitants of Zidon and Arbat were thy mariners, thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee were thy pilots. In other words, there was initially in you wisdom, and wise men knew how they charted a course for you, and the course they charted brought you into the place of prosperity that you've known throughout your history. In verse 9 it says, The ancients of Gabal and the wise men thereof were in thee were thy caulkers, and all the ships of the sea were the mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

In other words, it really says if you go back into the original translation, not only could they chart a course, but they knew how to keep you afloat. There was incredible wisdom given to you to know how to trade and buy and sell, and to travel among the nations, and in you many people of the world began to prosper. In verse 10 it also says, They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, men of war, they hanged the shield and the helmet in thee, and they set forth thy comeliness.

The Lord is saying through Ezekiel, people also came from other lands to be part of your army, and you not only became known as a trading society, but you had a military might. That was the envy perhaps in that part of the world, and people saw this might, and they saw this prosperity, and did what they could to leave other nations, and come and be part of this military power that you became. Now in chapter 28, Ezekiel begins to list as it is the downfall of Tyrus.

In verse 1 he says, The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, Son of man, say to the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God, because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, and I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas, yet thou art a man, and not God, though thy set thine heart as the heart of God. You see, this is the dilemma of when God allows the people to be blessed. They leave off any dependency they might have had on Him, and they become their own God, corrupted by the very wisdom that God gave to them in the first place.

Verse 3 says, You are wiser than Daniel. There's no secret that they can hide from you. I think of the technology today that God has given even this nation.

Satellites in space where there's nobody in the world that can even attempt to build some secret thing. It can't be seen from the heavens. And this was the type of wisdom that this merchant city on the ocean was given.

He says, You're wiser than Daniel. There's no secret that can be hidden from you. You have incredible knowledge.

And I think of America, for example, in just a couple of hundred years, the incredible wisdom that God gave to this country. To be putting men in space and to be developing technology that other societies who've been in existence much longer are always playing catch-up to find. It was a wisdom that came because God was at the very center of the core of those who at least professed to know His name and gave some direction in the beginning of the development of this society.

Verse 4 says, With thy wisdom and with thine understanding, you've gotten riches, and you've gotten gold and silver into your treasures. Verse 5, By thy great wisdom and thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God.

Behold, I'll bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations. They shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness, and they shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Oh, that we could learn from history.

Oh, that we could be a people who were truly wise and could begin to understand that patterns of how God interacts with nations and how men in their foolishness have interacted with God are all set throughout history. If we want to know the future of a society that is rejecting the knowledge of God, all we have to do is read the pattern of God that is clearly, clearly set throughout Scripture. There is a flashpoint, folks, where God will look at even His own people.

He's shown it to us throughout history and say this is enough of this. Away with this. This is a corruption of wisdom.

I send a blessing for a specific reason, but the hearts of the people have become hardened. They can't hear the Word of God anymore, and now they are turning away and becoming their own God. They're setting their own standards of right and wrong.

They're beginning to call evil good, and they're calling good evil. Oh, folks, we're living in a time. I am shell-shocked.

I am stunned literally at the perversion now that's coming through the media. I don't have a television, and once in a while I go into a weight club where one might be on, and most times if I am the one in there, I'll be probably watching the news, but periodically I have to endure someone else may have this thing on. I'm shocked.

I'm absolutely shocked at the filth and the stupidity that is feeding the society today. I looked out my window last night, and I was saying to my wife Teresa, I said, look across the river and look at all these lights of all these homes now. And just think for a moment, in about a third of them probably, the television set or some kind of electronic equipment is on, and people are feeding on perversion and filth and idiocy and foolish conversation.

Folks, you can't even find out what the news is anymore. It's all just entertainment and stupidity. I'm shocked at what this nation is becoming, and I plead for it as a man whose heart is broken.

I don't stand in judgment of anyone, but I plead, and as long as I live and breathe, I will fight for what I believe God intended to be a testimony of His goodness and His greatness in the world. I'll fight for it even to the last moment of time. And in chapter 27, in verse 17, I saw something as I was studying these things,

and you see here it says that the people of God were also found among you.

They were trading in your markets. There were people coming from all over the world, and they were trading and buying and selling and becoming rich and increasing their wealth. But you might even miss this if you don't look at it carefully, but in verse 17 of chapter 27 it says, Judah and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants.

They traded in thy market wheat of Minot and honey and oil and balm. And so in this commercial city was also found the people of God trading in the same marketplace as this society. And that's really significant because the wheat speaks about provision.

Here they are going down into the bowels as it is of this society and looking for provision that God says, I will provide, if you will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, I will give you all the things that you need. But no, not content with that, you see the people of Judah and Israel. You see, we're talking about a people who are going into captivity.

It's not like they are living righteously, and God is showing in the Scripture the reason why. I think of all the theology now that's in the church of Jesus Christ that is all about getting rich. It's all about having a piece of the pie.

It's all about being powerful. It's all about having an exerting influence over societies and over other people's lives. There's nothing about the cross.

There's nothing of giving of oneself for the purposes of God. There's nothing about servanthood. There's nothing about denial.

There's nothing about missions. There's nothing about yielding our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable service. No, the people of God are in the marketplace, finding the same source of provision that is bringing down the society that is all around them.

And that's what Ezekiel is trying to tell the people. You're in this place of corruption that is about to be judged by God Himself. And it talks about Judah and Israel are in there buying honey as well.

And in Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 15, honey is something that when Isaiah speaks about the Messiah, it says, butter and honey shall he eat that he may know how to choose the good and how to refuse the evil. And honey is equated with symbolically acquiring the knowledge and ability to refuse evil and choose good. And he's saying you're in the marketplace.

And this marketplace where you're getting your feeding is blinding your eyes to the point where you can't hear the Word of God anymore. Folks, I don't know how many churches today there are in America that if I were to stand in their pulpit this morning and preach to them the way I'm speaking to you, I'd literally clear the house out. They didn't come for this.

No, no, we didn't come to be told what is actually right and what is wrong. We came because we want to feel good about ourselves and we want you to tell us that what we're doing is right in the sight of God. And he says also you were there looking for oil.

And oil speaks of refreshing in the Bible. It speaks of light. It speaks of anointing.

You are taking what is holy and you are putting it upon flesh. And God says I have to judge the society for this. And also balm, which is healing.

It's a resin that is used for healing. Listen to the prophet Jeremiah. Actually it's God that's crying out through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah chapter 8 verses 19 and 22. He said behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country. He said I hear a cry.

There's a moan among my people. They're not healed. And he says is the Lord not in Zion? Is not her king in her? Verse 22.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? He said here are my people in the marketplace of Tyre. And they're looking there for healing which I have already provided for them. They're looking for all the devices that a perishing society has come up with in their own intellect and in their own wisdom.

Which they have cultivated apart from the knowledge of God. And they're going there. And this is where they think their healing is going to be found.

When Jesus says I am their healer. I am the one who stood in the pulpit and said I've come. And the Spirit of God is upon me to open prison doors and give sight to blinded eyes.

And to release those that have been captivated. And to heal those whose hearts have been bruised. And in a bruising sometimes it's beyond human repair.

But the Lord said it's me. I'm your healer. And here you are down in the marketplace.

Here you are gleaning knowledge from a perishing society. And bringing it into the house of God. And saying this is your healer.

This is your healing. And you hear the Lord crying is there no physician left? Is there no one who understands who I am? Is there no one who is willing to just in simple faith lay hold of who I said I am? And what I have already declared. I have one for you on the cross of Calvary.

In chapter 27 and verse 26. He says thy roars have brought thee into great waters. The east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.

Thy riches, thy fares, thy merchandise, their mariners, their pilots, their caulkers, the occupiers of the merchandise. And all the men of war that are in thee. And all thy company which is in the midst of thee shall fall into the midst of the seas in the days of thy ruin.

Ezekiel is crying out and says those who direct your course. The roars as it is have brought you into difficult waters. God said to Ezekiel the people now have become so hardened to my word that they'll no longer hear.

So I'm going to set before them through you an image of something that they might stop and consider. Can you imagine a society getting so hard that God almighty himself is speaking through the prophets in a perilous time. But they're refusing.

They're putting the word of God away. And the Lord says well it's only one thing left to do. I'm going to make a picture for them.

Through you. You think of other prophets having to lie on their side outside of cities and the various things that God. This is the last.

It's the final warning folks. When God's only speaking in pictures you've come. We've come to the end.

It's over. That's the last warning of God. Think of the images which the Lord has set before America and the world in recent times.

Now the things I'm about to share I share from a broken heart. You have to understand this. I stand as nobody's judge.

I do not stand in cynicism. And I do not stand and ever attempt to speak irreverently of people who have lost their lives in difficult times. But I want you to think of the towers in this city for a moment.

Symbols as it is. A pride. There's been a pride in America if we have the courage to admit it.

Of our towers are the biggest, they're the best, they're the highest. Of the commerce that we believe will keep us through thick and thin no matter what comes our way. And in one hour, as Isaiah said, your judgment comes.

In one hour these pictures of these towers falling were put before us. I believe that we might consider our ways. That we might stop and do a little more than sing God bless America.

But that we might repent of our ways and say God are you truly speaking to us. Has it come to the point where it's only in pictures now that you can speak to us. Are we so close now to the word of God.

Have we so shut away the voices of the prophets. That now it's only pictures. That's all that's left because it's a society that's so dull to even intelligence now.

Let alone the things of God. That the only way that they could hear is in pictures. Think of the Pentagon for a moment.

The symbol as we saw it of invincible strength. Of military might and force that can never be overcome by any power in this world. On fire.

The vulnerability all of a sudden is there. The picture is there. If God does not build a house we labor in vain.

If the Lord is not our defender then we have no defense at all. Think of the picture that the Lord. And it's a merciful picture because the picture could have been much more disastrous than this.

But these pictures are set before us. This last couple of weeks the media have been obsessed with a young lady who died in a hotel room. She died addicted, obsessed with gaining wealth at any cost.

I want to speak reverently. I don't want to speak ill. I don't know her final moments.

I do know she's very precious to the Lord. I do pray that on my heart she had a moment to cry out to God. And if she did, she's in heaven and wouldn't mind the things that I'm speaking this morning.

But given to self-gratification, we see now her lovers all coming out of the woodwork and all fighting over what she left behind. And even on the news, I was watching Fox News this week and the news commentator said we've had tens of thousands of emails coming in. Almost all unanimously saying what is wrong with us as a society? Why can't we put this image away? What did this woman ever write a book? Did she ever do something noteworthy? Did she ever accomplish something that is worth an award for peace? What did she do? She just lived for herself.

She was a fading beauty. She was addicted to drugs. She was obsessed with wealth and publicity and fame.

She was given, as it appears through testimony, to almost every form of self-gratification. She had numerous lovers. And they're all fighting now for what she left behind.

And why can't we put this picture away from us? A judge who was being interviewed on a show, I didn't see it but I was told, an actual judge said what is it about the society? What have we gotten to where this is dominating our news? Day in and day out, following this thing. And even the newscasters are becoming cynical. It's like an obsession.

It's like we are stuck in this soap opera and we can't get out of it. The whole world could be going into a nuclear holocaust and we're turning on our televisions and watching about this woman who died and everybody's fighting over the remains. But could it be that as a society this is what we've become? Could it be that this is where we're heading? If you were to read today, I don't have time, but if you read Ezekiel chapter 16, you'd be shocked at the parallel between this situation and how God describes His own people in the last moments before the justice of heaven became theirs.

Could it be that the Lord is, and I'm throwing it out only as a question, could it be that the Lord is putting before us a picture of what we've become as a nation? That we're a fading beauty? We did have a beauty. We were set as it is in motion by the hand of God. We did prosper.

And many of the nations of the world clamored to come into these borders because the goodness and the favor of God had been here. But then in the arrogance we became God to ourselves and we began to push the name of Christ out of our society, out of our schools and out of our courts and out of every institution and out of the marketplace. And we became addicted and obsessed with gaining wealth at any cost.

In spite of what it cost others and in spite of hardship that we may inflict, we became obsessed with these things. We were given to self-gratification. If that is indeed true, then the end result is that those lovers that we've courted instead of God will be one day fighting for what is left.

Scavenging over the resources as it is that are left. Folks, I speak this from a broken heart. I don't know how to convey this.

I was in prayer last night. I said, God, I don't know how to say this. I don't know how to express what I'm feeling in my heart.

I'll do the best I can, but there's something burning inside the heart of God and I'm only standing here as an oracle of God. I'm not angry and I don't have a soapbox and I'm not trying to prove a point. I'm speaking something that I know is coming from the heart of God.

It's for you, it's for me, it's for the future of this generation. These are pictures, the towers, the Pentagon, this lady. God rest her soul and I pray that God had tremendous mercy on her.

But thanks be to God that these pictures are not the only ones we're left with. There are other pictures. You see, if we were just left with these pictures, there'd be no hope.

We'd hang our hats and our heads as it is and give up. But there are other pictures. The day the towers came down, the day the Pentagon was attacked and caught fire, there was another picture.

There was an air flight, I believe it was flight 93, I'm not sure of that, where people simply decided it's better to stand up and fight than to passively let evil prosper. I thank God there was another picture. I thank God we weren't left just with this sense of people passively letting evil come into our borders and destroy everything about the society.

But there were people who said, no, in spite of personal cost, we are going to stand up and we're going to make a difference in this time. We're not going to passively sit here and let evil triumph. And it's a picture of good triumphing over evil, but at a great personal cost to those that were involved.

And I want to tell you something. I have a word for some people here this morning. I want you to go to Acts chapter 27, because you'd be wondering, well, Pastor, where are you going with this? And how do I fit into this? What is it that God wants to do through me? I've come here and I appreciate what you've said, and I know that we're in distress, but how do I fit? And what kind of a picture could it be that God wants to give this generation through my life? Now, next, chapter 27, it speaks about a people who are undertaking a journey.

And the word of God was there in this journey. And in chapter 27, verse 9 says, Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous because the fast was already passed, Paul admonished them. This is now God speaking to this ship as it is, which is representative in measure of what I'm speaking about this morning.

And he said to them, And this represents to me the pulpits of America and other countries, where true men and women of God are standing and saying, If we persist in this journey, I perceive there's going to be great damage to the ship and to many people's lives because of it. Verse 11 says, And we're living in a very perilous time when the pulpits of a nation have very little influence and authority anymore. Now, when the south wind, verse 13, blew softly, supposing they had obtained their purpose, they began sailing.

And now you know what happened. They disregarded the word of God. They got into an incredible storm.

They used every form of help that they thought they could use to keep the ship together in verse 17. And they began to be driven by the winds. They didn't know how to get out of the difficulty they were in.

And I do believe that the world now is moving quickly to this place of not understanding how to get out of the difficulty. Things are spiraling out of control very, very quickly. And if you don't know that, then you are choosing to live in ignorance.

Because this society, this entire world is spiraling down very, very quickly. Not only morally, but there's an incredible trepidation in people's hearts now. And they began to be driven by the winds.

There's no pattern, there's no course anymore, because they've rejected the word of God. And being exceedingly tossed with the tempest, the next day they lightened the ship. And they're starting to throw out their devices.

In other words, well, we tried this, it didn't work, let's try this, and it doesn't work. And they're starting to throw out all these things that they once had trusted in. Now, where is Paul during this journey? Now, Paul represents the church.

Paul represents the true Christian. Paul represents, to you and I this morning, the person who is sitting here, who truly is a follower of Jesus Christ and truly believes in Christ. And where is the church in all of this calamity? Now, it's interesting that Paul is below the water line.

He's in the bowels of the ship. He's in a place that is not visible to those who are trying to control their own situation above. He's in a place where perhaps the deepest and darkest forebodings of despair can be found.

Picture Paul for a moment. He's in the bowels of the ship. There's an incredible storm going on.

People are no doubt violently ill. There's excrement and water sloshing about the bottom of the ship. It's literally falling apart.

It's a place of despair. It's a place of hopelessness. It's a place where the enemy would want to take the mind of this man of God and literally shut him down.

And that's where many of you are right now. And you've come to the house of God. You say, God, I don't understand this.

Why am I in such a hard place? My job seems to be fairly reasonable. I have a home, and I've got clothes on my back, and I'm fighting this incredible battle of darkness. I can't figure out what it is that's going on in my mind.

I'm fighting day in and day out. This inner groaning just never goes away. I'm fighting this despair that is pressing me on every side, and I can't put my finger on a reason for it other than I'm on a journey in a world that is perishing.

That's exactly where Paul was. But, folks, in the midst of this journey, this man pressed through. And he found the Word of God where he was.

Because God always has the last picture. The last picture belongs to God. When you turn the page, it belongs to God.

The last picture is His. And the last picture we see in this particular storm in Acts chapter 27 is when the society that Paul was part of as a ship lost all hope. And when every chance that they saw of being saved was gone, all of a sudden God sets before them a picture.

And the picture is a man who has heard from God. It could be a woman here who has heard from God and stands up in the midst of the storm and says, Be of good cheer. I have been with God.

God has spoken to my heart. I have found His Word. I know His mind.

I know who I am. I know where I'm going. I'm on a journey.

And I've got good news for you. God has given me everyone who will travel with me on this journey. The place I'm going, you can go to as well.

Folks, the Lord is preparing you for a day. I've come to speak to you prophetically this morning. If you are in a dungeon of darkness, if you are in a place of despair, a picture comes from a negative.

That's the only way I can say it. There's a dark room first. There's a negative that develops.

And from the negative comes a picture. And the Lord is going to have a people in the last day. When all hell breaks loose and society is losing its moorings and hearts are failing them and the seas are roaring and mountains as things that people trusted in are being moved out of their places, you are going to come out of hiding all of a sudden.

You're going to stand in your apartment corridor, in your workplace, among your peers, in your cities and towns. Some will be on stages. Some will be on street corners.

But God is going to set you as the final picture in this generation. Hallelujah. You are the last picture.

You see, you can't live your whole life now trying to escape your situation. You've got to find God in it now. It's not just for your good.

It's for the good of everyone around you in the days to come. It's for your sons and daughters. It's for your family.

It's for your friends. It's for your co-workers. It's for your community at large.

It's for much more than just you. And God in His mercy will always have a vessel in the bowels of that ship. That's the mercy of God.

Yes, the ship was going to be lost, Paul said. This thing that set out to sail in arrogance, pushing away the Word of God, is going to come apart. But everyone who is willing to hear what I have to say, Paul was saying, is going to be saved.

You're going to be cast into a certain place, but you're going to be given your life. I've been with God, and Paul said, I believe it is just as He told me. I know there are people sitting here today that you're going through dungeons and dark places of despair.

You're going through battles in your mind that you're wondering, God, is there something wrong with me? No, there's nothing wrong with you. You're in the dark room. You're about to be made into a picture.

Hallelujah. I want to encourage you with everything that's in my heart. Find the Word of God where you are and stand on it.

I believe, Paul said, that it will be just as it has been told me. Can you see this man standing on the deck of the ship, and everyone's mouths are hanging open? They're exhausted from throwing out all of their resources, and finally Paul stands there. He's erect, he's straight, he's full of confidence, he knows his God, and he says, I believe that it will be just as it's been told me.

I want to encourage you, I'm going to say it again, to find the Word of God where you are. Don't come here today to try to escape, because the place you're in is where the picture of God, which is a confidence in Christ, is the picture. That's the ultimate picture.

It's I believe God. I have a confidence in my Christ. He will keep me.

And in the place that you're in now, in the darkness that you're fighting through, that confidence is being formed in you. Hallelujah. Greg, are you here? You around? I wrote a song in 2003.

It's called I Will Trust in God. I just want to sing it to you, just before we have an altar call. If you'll bear with me, please.

Hallelujah. I will trust in God all of my days  
Though the seas may roll And mountains lose their place  
Hearts of men may fail Tears on every face  
Safely I will stand In God's amazing grace  
In God's name In Christ I say  
Seas may roll You are in the very You're in the  
Stepping out to say, Lord, I'm not going to try to escape this. I'm going to find you.

And I'm trusting that you're going to make a picture of your keeping power through my life for a very terrified generation that's coming just down the road, whether it's in our lifetime or whether it's just a person you meet. It's so important that you are that picture of trust in God. If the Holy Spirit's speaking to you, I'm just going to ask you to step forward and just begin to worship.

And as you begin to worship, let God bring the healing. Let Jesus Christ be your healer. God come and give you courage this morning.

Lord, we thank you this morning for the knowledge that all of our struggles and difficulties have a purpose. You said that all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose. We love you, Lord, and we are called.

Thank you for entrusting these difficult places to us. Thank you, Lord, that we're going to find you there. And in a time of confusion, you're going to have a picture of a people who will stand with their hearts and hands raised to you, unafraid, completely fixed on the goodness of God.

Father, thank you from the depths of our heart. In Jesus' name. This is the conclusion of the message.

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