

The Journey From Prayer to Obedience

by Carter Conlon

The journey from prayer to obedience requires a willingness to surrender one's life to God's purposes and be set apart for His glory.

Duration: 56:14

Scripture: Esther 3:13, Romans 8:31-32

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the introduction of a new law in the book of Esther that gave the enemies of God's people the power to kill, steal, and destroy. The response of the Jews was mourning, fasting, weeping, and wailing. The speaker emphasizes the urgency of the times and the call for the church to come out from the world and be separate. He encourages believers to find their satisfaction and fulfillment in God alone, as He will reveal Himself as Almighty God. The sermon also references Romans 8, highlighting the power of the new law of life in Christ and the potential for believers to impact the world when they are separated to the purposes of God.

Transcript

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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. If you'll turn with me in your Bibles, the Old Testament, the book of Esther, Chapter 3. Find Psalms, and then go back to Job, one more book, and then one after that is Esther.

Esther, Chapter 3. I'm going to be looking today at the journey from prayer to obedience. The journey from prayer to obedience. Now let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, thank you for your presence. Lord, if we don't have your presence, we have nothing. We are relegated to ideas about you, but they're powerless ideas.

Lord, thank you that you have chosen to abide here. Thank you, God, that you have chosen to abide in every heart that's open to you, in every heart that wants to obey you. God, I'm asking today that you would

anoint me.

I'm insufficient, Lord, to speak this word that you've given me. I need the touch of heaven today. And I'm asking you to quicken my mind and heart, physical body, and take this which you've given to me and multiply it.

And quicken it, O God, that I may speak it clearly and that every heart in this house and everyone who hears this message in the days to come may understand what you're calling your people to be. Lord, I thank you for the anointing. Break every yoke of darkness.

Cast away fear from our hearts. Give us the love of God for every fallen person in this world. Give us an understanding of the incredible depth of your resource and your willingness to supply our lack.

God, I thank you for what you're going to do today. Lord, I love you. We love you as your people.

Speak to us now. We ask this believing in Jesus' name. Esther chapter 3, the journey from prayer to obedience, beginning at verse 9. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed.

And I will pay 10,000 talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business to bring it into the king's treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hamathathah, the Agagite, the Jew's enemy. And the king said unto Haman, the silver is given to thee and the people also to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Then were the king's scribes called on the 13th day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants and to the governors that were over every province and to the rulers of every people of every province, according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus was it written and sealed with the king's ring. And the letters were sent by post into all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the 13th day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take a spoil of them for a prey.

Now the book of Esther is written between the first return of Jewish exiles from Babylon and Persia to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. and the second return led by Ezra in 457 B.C. It's at this time that the events that are recorded in the book of Esther happened. You know that after the Babylonian captivity, the Medo-Persian empire conquered the empire of Babylon. We spoke about it last week.

A king was fore-raised actually by God. That means he was foretold before he was even born that his name would be Cyrus. You find that in the book of Isaiah.

And he wrote a decree releasing all the Jews who were in captivity, who wanted to go back again and rebuild the ruins of the place of God's promise. Surprisingly, for the number of people that were in captivity, of course a lot of them were born in captivity, and they just simply chose to stay there. It was comfortable, and I would imagine that many of the people had formed alliances, relational alliances, and they had formed financial obligations and such like, and so because of it they chose to stay in this place that had once been, and in small measure I suppose still continued to be, their place of captivity.

And in retrospect, when we look back, the amount of people that headed out initially to rebuild was very small in comparison to the numbers that actually were living at that time in the now Medo-Persian empire. I think it has an application to today. There is a great call of scripture that you and I are to respond to

Christ, and we are to let our lack be filled absolutely by His resource.

We are to be raised up to be a testimony to a fallen world that in reality God Almighty is alive, that His Son did die by the power of the Holy Ghost, He was raised from the dead, He now sits at the right hand of all authority and power, and the rebuilding as it is of the fallen down places in our lives are to be a testimony of that. The call of the Christian is to press in to the promises of God and to lay hold of them by faith. Knowing full well there is nothing we can do to change the ruin.

We are in a sense indelibly stamped by our culture, we are stamped by our whole upbringing, the society and everything around us, and of course by what we have become apart from God. But God says, I will come in if you call out to me and I will override the ruin, and I will enable you to build, and you will build a temple that has a greater glory actually than any form of glory that you ever knew. I'm going to come into your life and I'm going to make you something that you could never be in your own strength.

Now there are only really a few that respond to that call. Today we have multitudes of people sitting in the house of God all over the world, and sad to say, as in this day of Esther, there really are a lot of people who will acknowledge this is true, Christ is risen, Christ sits at the right hand of glory, all power is given to him, he can take and make anybody into whatever he has called them to be and there is an acknowledgement. They will go to Bible studies, they will go to prayer meetings, they will learn about these things, but so few will actually get up and say, God, use me to rebuild the ruin.

First in my life, and secondarily the ruin of this society that's all around me. Use me, I surrender my life as a living sacrifice for your purposes. Take me, mold me, make me, shape me, send me.

Wherever you would have me go and whatever you would have me to do, God, I yield my life to your purposes. Tell me when, has anybody ever done anything that is recorded in history that was great for the name of Jesus Christ who has not had this heart? When has a haphazard Christian ever risen up and just sort of stumbled as it is into the glory of God? No, beloved, it doesn't happen that way. There is a determination in the heart.

It's a man, a woman, it's a young person, it's an older man or woman who just is sitting in the presence of God, and all of a sudden the revelation comes like it came to Jonathan. When Saul's whole army is trembling on the hillside, Jonathan says, Hey, it doesn't matter to God whether it's by many or by few. If God has determined the victory, let's get up and let's go and let's fight.

Let's bring glory back to the name of God. Let's bring honor to His name. It's not in our strategy.

It's not in our battle plan. It's in the surrendered vessel in the hand of God, that God empowers and makes much more than he could ever be or she could ever be in their natural strength. He takes our little offering and multiplies it, and through it brings deliverance and feeding oftentimes to thousands and thousands who would never know about God were there not somebody somewhere who just rose up and said, Lord, I believe you, and I give my life to you.

You see, it's in this place of complacency that suddenly an enemy seemingly triumphed. A wicked man, the Bible says, whose name was Haman, who got into authority and power in this kingdom, introduced into this entire kingdom a law which permitted the enemies of God's heritage to spoil and destroy them. A law suddenly comes.

It's incredible when you, it's a type really in a sense of what happened in the Garden of Eden. Man was dwelling in the presence of God. Adam and Eve were living in that abundant provision and presence, but they began to dwell carelessly in that place, and they began to look at the things that were forbidden and to take them and taste them.

And because of it, their eyes were open and they knew evil. And the devil, who was the most subtle of all of the creation that God had, he introduced into the human race a law which permitted our enemies to despoil and destroy us. There is a law that's at work in you right now to destroy you.

Paul, put a marker in Esther and go to Romans, please. Romans chapter 7, where Paul spoke about this law that's at work in us. It's at work in you, it's at work in me right now.

Romans chapter 7, verse 15. Now here's the law that was introduced by the devil himself into humanity. Romans 7, verse 15, where Paul says, For that which I do, I allow not.

For what I would, that do I not. But what I hate, that do I. Here's the law. Paul says, If then I do that which I would not, I consent to the law that it is good.

Now then it's no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. For the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would, I do not. But the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it's no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then, he says in verse 21, a law. That when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, to bring me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Now Paul called it law in verse 23. He said that it literally wraps itself around the makeup of his physical body.

He said there's a law that's been introduced into my life. And this law causes me to have no power over my enemies. This I will to do.

Now he's talking about the state of a man who's not yet regenerated by the Spirit of God. But he said it causes me to want to do, but where to find the resource I don't know. I delight after the law of God.

I come to the house of God and in my mind I hear these incredible truths and I do want to do them. But where do I find the power? How do I escape this nature that's in me, this law? It's like a law of gravity per se. I try to leap into the glorious life of Christ, but I end up coming crashing down time and again.

It's wrapped in my very physical makeup. And it seems that I'm incapable of fighting against it. And this is exactly, in Esther, the chapter we began in, this is exactly what the people felt when this law was introduced.

This law of death, this law of slaughter, this law that gave the enemies of God's people the power over them to take what they had and to kill their children and to spoil them. In other words, any increase that had come into their life, the enemy now was given power not only to kill and steal and destroy, but to take all the increase. And chapter 4, verse 3 shows us the response in the book of Esther.

It says, And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. Now, can you imagine this for a moment? There were 127 provinces in the Medo-Persian Empire. It stretched from India to Ethiopia.

All of these people wanting to fight for their lives and fight for their families and friends, but having no courage, no resources, and no authority to fight. The law comes, and the immediate response is weeping and wailing. It's all types of despair, sackcloth and ashes falling off, as it is falling on their faces with no power to stand up against their enemies.

And this is always the way of those who are called by the name of God, and yet have become comfortably intermixed with the ways of the world around them. They fail to see that their strength is being slowly taken away. It is only my opinion, but I am of the opinion, that many of these people didn't rise up and go back to rebuild the fallen kingdom of God, the land of promise.

You see, everything in the Jewish life centered around Jerusalem, and it's almost inconceivable that they wouldn't get up and go back and become part of the rebuilding of the disgrace, as it were, that had become of the people of God. But they were intermixed. And because they were intermixed, the enemy rose up against them, and they failed to see in this intermixing that their strength was slowly leaving them, so that when the law finally was introduced one more time, they had no power to fight.

They were powerless. They had the history, the tradition, they had the name of Jehovah God on their lips, but they were powerless, powerless to stand up and fight this enemy that was going to destroy their homes. It reminds me of Samson, this mighty man of God, who's called to deliver his people.

He's called to be a standing symbol of this enduring and abiding strength of God. But he began to compromise, and he began to play in places where he shouldn't be. He began to touch things he shouldn't touch.

He defied the authority of his parents and those who were around him, and began to be led by his own lusts. Yet, when the enemies would come around him, he would shake himself and rise up, and seemingly was as strong as he always had been, and became comfortable in this intermixing that had gotten into his life, unaware that his strength was slowly, slowly being taken away from him. And finally, one day, in his own foolishness, he gave away the source of his strength.

When he said to this woman, Delilah, that was being used by the devil to try to take his strength away, who was causing him to sleep on her knees time and again, he said, I've been a Nazarite from the womb. I've been set apart from my mother's womb for the things of God. See, that was the source of his strength.

That is always the source of the Christian strength. It's not that I have a history, or I'm big or strong, or I'm better at some things than other people. No, here's the source of my strength.

I've been set apart for God from the day of my mother's womb. In Beloved, it has a similar application to you and I. From the day that you were born again by the Spirit of God, from the day that you repented of your sins, and the Spirit of God came upon you, just like Samson, you and I are set apart now for God. We are set apart for the purposes of God, for the will of God, for the glory of God, to show the strength of God to a fallen generation.

This was Samson's purpose in life. And he said, my hair has not been cut, I've been separate. This is the sign of my separation.

And of course, when the separation was taken away, Samson's strength died. Recently, in the news, we've had a Super Bowl just passed. And in the Super Bowl, there was an act, apparently, and in this act, a woman bared part of her upper body.

And because of that, there's outrage. Outrage, of course, it's a face-saving outrage, Beloved, you have to understand. It's such hypocrisy, it's unreal.

But there's outrage that this kind of thing could happen when our children supposedly were watching this. How could we allow this to happen to our children? I read a couple of articles this week in different newspapers, and one of the authors, these are secular authors, said, what's wrong with our society? Firstly, why are we letting immoral, self-centered, wicked people lead us? Why are they defining our culture? And what business do they even have in a sporting event? Whatever happened to the high school marching band? And secondly, we're outraged at the bearing of a body part, but how come nobody's concerned about the sadomasochistic clothing that was being worn in that particular production? One of the authors of an article went to the store where this was bought, and it's so disgusting what these particular aspects of clothing that this young lady was wearing represent, that I cannot speak it from this pulpit. Everything that she was wearing had a meaning.

There are paraphernalia that are purchased and bought by people who equate sexuality with violence, and pleasure with pain. And this was the garb that she was wearing. How come people are allowed to grope themselves in each other, in evident sexual posturing on television, and everybody's okay with this? Everybody's all right with it.

There'd be not a Ewan cry were it not have gone the extra step of bearing a body part. And how about the millions of professing Christians who stayed home from church because this form of entertainment meant more to them than worshiping God? How come? How about them? All the Christians who are sitting now, and I can just picture all the sermons that happened either today, or maybe will be happening tomorrow, or whatever. But I can just picture all the sermons about how obvious and disgusting by all the pastors in America who canceled their Sunday night service so that people could watch football.

Do we dare even take it a step further and ask why? That Sunday evening services are now on the decline to the point where they're almost non-existent in America anymore. Do we take it a step further and ask why prayer meetings are becoming infrequent, unfocused, and powerless? Do we take it the final step and ask why the church has almost lost its voice? Why is it that it's the secular writers now that are the only voices for morality left seemingly in the Western world? Nobody even looks to the church anymore. The church is like a Samson.

The church has lost her separation to the purposes of God. The church's voice is almost non-existent. A laughing stock, powerless, because of the intermixture of God's people with the society all around.

And I tell you, beloved, introduced into the midst of all this is a law. God says, I will not be mocked. I will not be mocked by this mixture.

There will be a law introduced giving the enemies of God's people power over them. The law of sin and death begins to work. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6, 16, what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

You are the temple of the living God.

And God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. He says, wherefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not. That means, touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.

Now, touch not. Here's what it means. It means handling an object as to exert a modifying influence upon it or oneself.

When he says, touch not, it means basically, don't have any other gods before me. Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not opposed to watching a football game.

But I am opposed to it when it begins to be idolatry in the hearts of God's people. I am opposed to this god of sports that has risen up in the western world, that is finally, by God's grace, coming crashing down from college sports right through to professional sports. We're starting to see the rot that is infused in the middle of it.

He talks about not touching something when it gets to the point that it's exerting a modifying influence on you. It's changing your character. It's moving your focus from God.

You are gripping it to the point where it's become an idol. He says, if you do, I'll be a father to you. In other words, I'll be revealed to you as one in which you can have faith.

And you should be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. If you will separate yourself from these things, I will reveal myself to you as the Lord who is all-ruling, absolute, and the universal sovereign. God says, if you will separate yourself from me, I will show you who I am.

I will come to you. I will give you the power to tread on your enemies. I will cause you to stand.

I will infuse your mind with truth. Faith will begin to open up in your heart. And the separation unto me... Now, you have to understand something.

There is a separation which is pure legality. And this is not what God is talking about. It's a separation of the heart.

It's not about walking around every day worrying about doing this and doing that. It's a separation of the heart. It's the man or woman that says, God, I want to be separate for you, for your purposes.

I'm tired of your church being powerless. I'm tired, oh God, of people dying in my neighborhood, in my family, in the workplace. And everywhere I go, the law of sin is destroying people by the hundreds and thousands.

And I seemingly have no voice in the midst of it. I'm tired of it, God. I'm called to speak for you.

I'm called to stand for you. I'm called to be a physical living display of the fact that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. My life is to be indisputable evidence that there is a God.

Whatever it takes. The time is too short now for games. Christ is coming.

Difficult days are ahead for all of the world. And the call of God is going on once more to His church. Come out from among them and be separate to me, says the Lord.

I will show you who I am. I'll lead you in paths of righteousness. I will do in you what only God Almighty Himself can do.

I will satisfy you. You won't need to run to things for satisfaction. You won't find your sense of destiny or fulfillment in them.

You will find it in me. Because you will see me. I will reveal myself to you as Almighty God.

Hallelujah. In Esther chapter 4, the call comes to Esther to be identified with the people of God. And motivated in spite of personal peril to move forward for the good of others.

Esther was the queen. But she was also a Jewish. And in her mind, no doubt, there was difficulty come.

But she was in a very comfortable position. And I feel that she just felt quite simply like the rest of us do from time to time. If I just keep my mouth shut, everything will be fine.

I've been blessed and God has led me. I've found favor and I'm in the king's court. But her uncle Mordecai, a righteous man, came, sent a message to her in verse 13.

He said, Esther, think not with thyself that thou shall escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then there shall enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.

And who knoweth whether thou come to the kingdom for such a time as this? He said, go gather. Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer. Go gather all the Jews that are present in Shushan and fast ye for me.

And neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. And I also and my maidens will fast likewise. And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law.

And if I perish, I perish. Esther said, yes, I am living in comfort. But there is a higher law than living for myself.

I might survive, but people around me are perishing. And so she called together and said, I want everybody around me to fast for three days. And at the end of the three-day fast, I'm going to go into the king.

And I'm going to beg him for mercy for my people. You see, it was unlawful to come into the presence of the king without an invitation. It had been 30 days since her last invitation into the king's presence.

If he did not hold out the golden scepter to her, she would be immediately put to death. And she knew it. And so Esther chose to obey.

Esther chose to fast. But there was a journey after the fast that she had to undertake. It's wonderful that we fast as a church.

It's wonderful that we take time to pray. But there is a perishing world out around us. And for everyone who can hear it today, there is a journey that we must take beyond the fast.

There's a place that we must go. It's a place where God calls us, a place of obedience. She gathered together.

And the end result in chapter 8 is that the enemy was overthrown. Now, a very interesting thing happened. The Bible tells us clearly that the law of the Medes and Persians, you remember Daniel, it could not be altered.

Once the law was signed into effect, it stayed into effect. There is a law of sin and death at work in you and I and all of humanity. And that law, in effect, is still in effect.

If you turn away from God, you'll find out very quickly that law is still active. When you came to Christ. What happened in the day of Esther is what happens for the Christian when we come to Christ.

It is not the removal of the existing law, but rather the introduction of a new law to the people which changed their position and gave them courage to stand and fight. Amazing when you see it. Not a putting away of the old law, but an introduction of a higher law, a new law.

And a new law was sent out to all the provinces, 127, wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together and to stand for their life. To destroy, to slay, to cause to perish all the power of the people in the province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and take the spoil of them for a prey. That all the Jews, verse 13, should be ready against that day to avenge themselves of their enemies.

Thanks be to God. Go with me to Romans chapter 2 very, very quickly. I want to show you something.

Romans chapter 8, rather. The apostle Paul talks about this new law. There is a new law.

It already has been enacted. Now, it's a choice that we have to either move towards it or to stay in our old powerless position. The people in Esther's day received this new law which overrode the old law.

They were both in effect, but the new law had a higher authority than the old one. And the new law said, you don't have to get up off your face. You can now fight.

You now have resources. Now, the resource was nothing more than a law. Amazing when you think of it.

But when that understanding came into their minds, the Jews rose up and said, hey, we have been given authority to fight. We don't have to lie down and die in this place. We don't have to let our enemies trample our families and our loved ones and spoil us.

And spoil everything that God wants to do in our lives. There's a new law that's been issued that's given us the power to stand up and fight for our loved ones. And fight for the glory and fight for the honor of God.

There is a new law. Paul says in Romans 8-2, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Paul said, there's a new law.

It's a higher law. I've been given life by the power of God. And I am now free from this law of sin and death.

I'm free, assuming that I'm separated to the purposes of God. I am free now to know the life of Christ. I am free from the passions of my flesh.

I'm free from the weaknesses of my own carnal being and my own natural mind. I'm brought into the supernatural life of Jesus Christ. Almighty God has taken up residence in my heart and in my life.

And a new law has come into my life. No longer do I have to bow down and cower before my enemies. No longer do I have to wonder if God is going to work on my behalf.

There has been a law written in my heart. God penciled it there with His own hand. Romans 8-11, He said, But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

He makes me free from the law of sin and death and He quickens our mortal bodies. In other words, He brings death in us to life again. He gives us resurrection power.

He raises us out of weakness and confusion and foolishness and brings us into the strength of God. Verse 13, Paul says, If you live after the flesh, you shall die. But if through the Spirit you demortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.

This new law of life in Christ gives me power to mortify the deeds of my body. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God if we can ever get a hold of it.

I don't have to be led by the deeds of my body. That's why God says, Be separate unto Me. Be separate unto Me.

There's a life awaiting you that you don't understand when you're intermixed with the people of the world. Come out from among them. Be separate.

There is a life. There's a law of life in Christ that is yours. It's your inheritance.

It will take you higher and farther than anything this world could ever offer you. Romans 8.14, he says, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. This law of life in Christ leads me from victory to victory.

Victory to victory. I don't go from victory to defeat. It's victory to victory.

Even if I stumble, God picks me up and turns my stumbling into a victory for His honor and for His glory. Romans 8.31, 32, Paul says, What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? In verse 37, he says, And all these things were more than conquerors through Him that loved us. I'm persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The law of life in Christ gives me a faith that enables me to conquer through the power of God's love. Conquer fear which wants to dominate my heart and life. To conquer the powerlessness that the enemy wants to convince me and convince you will always be part of your life.

The law of love in Christ causes me to be drawn out of compromise. Drawn out of everything that occupies my heart and mind. And drawn to Him because deep in my heart I can say, God, I love you.

I love you with all my heart, my soul, my mind and my strength. I love you, O God. And that love for you has caused your love to be formed in me.

And now I have a passion to see your people one more time glorify you. One more time rise out of the ash heap of the enemy's plans and attack. One more time rebuild the glorious temple of praise that your church is supposed to be to your name.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. There are numerous victories waiting to be won today.

The Holy Spirit clearly showed this to me this week. There are numerous victories, wonderful victories that are just waiting to be won. But first, there has to be someone who is born for this time, who is willing to be separate and identified with God and His people.

Somebody has to rise up. Somebody has to go in. At the risk of personal loss, to find the favor of God on behalf of those who cannot fight for themselves.

It could be a businessman, who at the risk of his own future, will first ask God and then his or her bosses for favor to begin a Bible study or a prayer meeting among his co-workers. A businessman, a businesswoman who just says, Look what's happening around me. Look at the despair, the lies, the deceiving.

Look at the law of death at work. And I'm so intermixed with the people that I have no authority. I have no voice.

But I'm tired of it. I'm going to fast. I'm going to pray.

I'm going to ask God for a mandate. And then I'm going to go in to those in authority and say, I want to start a Bible study here. I want to start a Bible study because people are dying.

I want to start a Bible study because marriages are falling apart. I want to start a Bible study because traitors and insiders don't know the difference between what is true and what is a lie anymore. I want to start a Bible study because people have lost their moorings and don't understand what God could do for them.

It's the man, it's the woman that finally says, in spite of the personal cost to me. Esther said, if you fast with me for three days, I will go in and if I die, I die. And thanks be to God, if I die and it means separation to the purposes of God, then it's a glorious death.

No matter what kind of a form it's going to take. Whether it's a death to my ambition or my future or my plans as I see them. But certainly it'll be death to my being intermixed with the ways of this world.

It's the teacher who finally says, I've had enough. I've just had enough of the death that's around me. And cowering all day under this supposed wicked law.

This law that is enabling the enemy to steal and kill and rob and destroy. It's a teacher that says, by God's grace, I'm going to fast. And I'm going to go in and I'm going to seek the favor of those in authority to start a Bible study among my peers.

It's the construction worker who does the same. It's the student, like one of our young people who just last year said, I'm so tired of all the destruction in my school and just began to stand at the flagpole every morning and pray. And that turned into a mini revival in that school eventually.

But that young person was willing to just take that first step all alone every morning, standing at the flagpole. And the first to approach them were just out of curiosity. Others came and gave their lives to Christ.

Even a teacher, I believe, joined them in prayer, began to join them in prayer in the morning. And before you know it, it turned into a Christian club within that high school. It's the neighbor who looks out his window and says, God, I'm tired of seeing the devil destroy all these street corner teens.

I'm tired of the destruction. I'm even more tired of not having a voice among them. I'm more tired of being powerless to speak a word that can bring them back to life again.

God, let it begin with me. Let the separation come into my life now. Separate me for your purposes.

It's the police officer that says, I'm tired of watching my fellow officers go down the drain. I'm tired of watching their marriages destroyed. I'm tired of watching them given over to alcohol and depression.

I'm tired of it. God, separate me now. Separate me and call me.

Show me what to do and give me the courage to do it. And if I perish, I perish. I feel the Holy Spirit calling us to a fast.

The first week of March. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. A three day fast.

Where we will eat no solid food but only drink liquids. And in that fast, we're going to pray. Everybody who attends is going to pray.

And say, God, set me apart. Show me what you would have me to do. This is a wicked time.

This is an evil generation. In this time of fasting, I feel we're going to be spending nights. And there will be an open microphone here where people can pray.

And we will agree with you for your situation. What it is you believe in God to do through your life. We're going to spend time.

We will call businessmen, businesswomen out of the, those that will be attending. And the elders of this church will be anointing you with oil. We'll pray over you.

A prayer of faith and ask for divine favor. We're going to be calling teachers, construction workers, students, neighbors, police officers. Everybody that's attending.

We'll be anointing. We'll be praying. This is a desperate hour.

And God wants to do something so beyond us. Wants to raise up a generation that will go beyond prayer to obedience. A separated people for God.

Our cry will be, Lord Jesus, show your glory one more time. Show your glory in my neighborhood. Show your glory in my workplace.

But oh God, show it through my life. Make a difference through me. I have known this favor.

I have understood it over the years. Years ago, we were attempting to obey God and establish a church in a very, very dark and depressed area in Canada. And the local priests were putting us out of virtually every building that we would occupy.

They would put us out of the building. They had exerted such influence on the community. Finally, we began to pray and say, God, give us a building of our own.

And I remember finding this abandoned church in a little town and arranging for a meeting with a Catholic council. All the men on that council unsaved and many previously resisting the gospel. I remember we prayed.

We fasted. We knew how to pray. I remember going into the meeting holding nothing back and saying, I'm here.

This is what we intend to do at this building. We intend to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We intend to see the oppressed set free.

We intend to feed those that are hungry. We intend to give hope to those that have no hope. We intend to introduce them to the salvation through Jesus Christ.

I held nothing back. They dismissed me and called a couple of weeks later and said, we've decided to give you the building for a dollar. Out of that, church grew another congregation, a French speaking congregation.

And I remember going to see another school building because they outgrew our school building. And we looked at it. It was appraised at about three hundred and something thousand dollars.

We had no money. Actually, we never never had any money except for missions, really. And the building was owned by 10 Jewish lawyers.

And so we offered them a tax receipt for the building. The real estate agent looked at us like we were insane. But we said we want to use this building for a Christian church.

And 10 Jewish lawyers gave us that building for a tax receipt for a Christian church. You see, God gives favor to those who pray. God gives favor.

I've known the favor of God. God gives favor. Don't don't let the devil tell you it can't be done.

That's the old law. There's a new law of life in Christ. It can be done.

If God calls you to do it, it not only can be done, it will be done. The purpose of this fast is to find out what is it. First of all, it's for separation, for the purposes of God.

You will never know the mind, the will of God without separation. It will never come to you in the middle of a football game. It will come to you when you begin to pray and say, God, I want to be separate for your purposes.

God will enable you and I to be separate for his purposes. Then begin to speak into your heart what it is that your life is to do. We will pray together.

Believing that you're going to move into that area that God speaks to you. I can't tell you what it is, but the Holy Spirit is going to tell you. We have an army of about 8000 people here at Times Square Church.

And can you imagine the force for good that could be done in the greater New York area? With 8000 people getting hold of God. Separated to the purposes of God. Infused with the life and the strength, this new law of life in Christ.

No longer brought under this old law of subservience to sin. Because they have made the choice to be separated to the purposes of God. Where God says, I will reveal myself to you as the Lord God Almighty.

You will see my power. You begin to understand who I am. And you will walk in.

And you see, here's the key. It will not be in your presentation, but God says, the hearts of kings are in my hand. And I will turn them any way I want to.

You could end up before that wicked person that has been gripped of wickedness. That's leading your organization and walk in with the confidence of God. That it may not happen overnight, but it's going to happen.

God will turn that heart. And one way or another, his word is going to come into that workplace. All he needs is a vessel.

All he needs is a man or woman, a God that is willing to stand there. And say, Lord, use my life for your glory. Hallelujah.

And if I perish, I perish. To live is Christ. To die is gain.

We're going to fast. But it begins, beloved, with separation. And that is my altar call today.

It's the Holy Spirit's altar call. It's not mine. The Holy Spirit's altar call to this church today is separation.

And we're probably going to be hearing more messages on this before the first week of March. Separation. And I know today, I know that the Holy Spirit is speaking to people in this congregation today, education annex here in the main sanctuary, about areas in your life that are hindering your walk with God.

You are intermixed with the ways of the unsaved around us. And you need to become separate now. Separated from the idiotic television that is out there.

Separated. The devil's got you convinced that if you get rid of your television that you're missing so much. What are you missing? You know, 800 instances of fornication and murder a day.

The stupid scolding that goes on on these daytime talk shows. You're missing a lot. Out of touch? Thank God I'm out of touch.

I've been out of touch for 20 years. Thank God I'm out of touch. Separated from immoral relationships.

There are some people here today, you're unequally yoked in a relationship. I'm not talking, if you're already married, too bad. You have to trust God for that one.

But for those that are not and you are unequally yoked. There's others here. You're going to bars.

You come to the house of God and then you're heading off and you're going to clubs and bars and wondering why you have no power. You have no voice, no influence. There's others.

You are just as crooked as people around you in business. And you justify it by saying, well, you know, that's just the way things are. I have to do these things.

And of course, everybody understands. God knows. Well, sorry.

He knows, but he doesn't agree. There needs to be a separation. And it is hard.

But it's life. It's absolute life. There was a group of a pair of Siamese twins.

A little while ago that. Underwent the risk of an operation. Unfortunately, they both died.

But they underwent the risk, they said, because to be free from this bondage is worth the risk. As they considered it, this bondage to one another is worth the risk of both of us dying. And those are just Siamese twins in a sense that could endure and get through this life.

But they said it's it's it's better to be free. I'll take the risk. And I say for the Church of Jesus Christ, it's time for the Holy Ghost to take out that two edged sword.

For the person who says, God. I'm willing to run the risk of whatever comes into my life to be free from the snares of this world that have gotten entangled themselves all around me. To be set apart for the purposes of God.

If I perish, I perish. But, God, if I perish, I'm going out with joy. I'm going out of God with a song of praise on my lips and a vision of almighty God.

I'll go out like Stephen, maybe under a pile of rocks from people who don't like what I'm doing. But I'll go out with a vision of Christ at the right hand of glory. I'll go out glorifying God.

Hallelujah. Now, I don't have a martyr's complex. Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying.

But I know that there is sometimes difficulty and pain to come to those who make that decision to be separate. But that's the altar call the Holy Spirit has given me to give you today. To those who want to be separated to the purposes of God.

And you personally know what this separation involves. And if you're willing to do it, God says, I'm going to reveal myself to you as almighty God. I'm going to guide you.

I'm going to give authority to your voice. You're going to make a difference for my kingdom. Would you stand, please, as we stand and come forward.

Balcony, either aisle. Go to either exit. Education annex, just make your way to the screens.

Just come down, move in closely, please. Give room to those who want to be separated. I do believe, beloved, this could be the beginning of an incredible touch of God in your life and around this tri-state area of New York City.

I had a sense in my heart yesterday in prayer of anticipation that's beyond anything I've known for a very, very long time. An anticipation of what God is going to do. He's going to find somebody.

And the reports that will come back after today will be phenomenal. He's going to find somebody that will just go into their school, just go into their workplace, just be separated to God. Get the mind of God.

Understand the law of life in Christ. Be free themselves, free from this entanglement of this society. And we'll walk in, in the power of God.

And God will walk in with you. You won't go alone. This new law of life in Christ is what you will preach.

You will bring this life of Christ to others around. You will say simply, what I have, you can have too. Here it is.

I'll show it to you. There's a new law. You don't have to live under the bondage of death and sin any longer.

Hallelujah. Lead us please, if you will, Pastor Patrick and everybody who wants to respond. You want to be separated.

Separated to God. It's a simple, all to call it, could be from anything and everything. From blatant sin to just seemingly harmless practice.

But you want to be separated for the purposes of God. Please step out. Isaiah was lifted up into the presence of God.

And when he saw God's holiness, he saw his own unworthiness. And the moment he opened his mouth and said, I'm unclean. And I dwell, I live, my dwelling place is in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

As soon as God knew it was in his heart to be separate, he touched it. And says, your iniquity is purged. Your sin is cleansed.

Then he began to hear the voice of God. And God said, who will go for us and who will we send? And when he was clean, he could now hear. And he had courage and said, here am I. Send me.

And that's what you're doing at this altar today. Those that have come, your confession is, I am undone. I have been living in the midst.

I've been intermixed in uncleanness. And because of it, I hardly hear your voice. And I have no power among your people.

God, today you're going to change it. Pray with me now. Lord Jesus Christ, I come to you.

I've heard your word. I understand. Your call.

That's upon me. Today. I confess.

That I have not been fully. Set apart for you. I live in mixture.

God forgive me. For what this has done. To your testimony.

In my life. I'm sorry for this. I want to be separate.

Today you promised me. That this desire in my heart. Would make me aware.

Of your life. That you are willing. To live within me.
Oh God separate me. Strengthen me. Guide me.
To my life. Make a difference. Where I live.
And in my neighborhood. At my workplace. In my home.
In my community. In my city. Guide me.
Show me. What you would have me. To do for your glory.
I yield myself. To your purposes. This world is wicked.
It is quickly. Passing away. It is deeply.
Being overrun. By the power of darkness. I don't want to be part of it.
Anymore. Lead me out. Glorious Savior.
Lead me out. Into the place of your life. And in this place.
I yield. To your full purpose. And your leading.
For my life. I will cast away fear. By the power.
Of your love in me. And I will go. Wherever you call me.
And do. What you call me to do. And I will do it with a rejoicing heart.
For greater is he. Who lives within me. Than he who is in the world.
Oh, God, thank you. Now, beloved. Remember.
The first week of March. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. I don't know the dates offhand.
But the first week of March. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Now, those who are listening to this on the internet.
Around the world. I want to ask you to fast with us. First week of March.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. And if you'd be kind enough to email us. Let us know what your prayer is.
That we can lift your name up before God. When we gather to pray. Let's let this be as much as possible.
A prayer meeting of people all throughout the world. And I thank you. God bless you.
This is the conclusion of the message.

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