

The Journey to the Other Side of the Cross

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the journey to the other side of the cross, where God is about to do a new thing. It highlights the need for believers to take this journey, surrendering fully to God and experiencing His power and glory. The message encourages embracing weakness, trusting God's process, and seeking resurrection life on the other side of the cross.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, John 12:24, Isaiah 45:22

Topics: "Journey of Surrender", "Embracing Resurrection Life"

Description

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Transcript

It's about a journey that we're all going to take to the other side of the cross. Now we heard tonight, I think prophetic words, we heard it twice, that God's about to do a new thing. Now the way I always hear that is, he says in this word, I am the Lord, I change not.

So technically speaking, he does an old thing with new people. Another generation begins to experience what others before have already experienced. And we're a generation that has really not taken in great measure a journey to the other side of the cross.

And you'll understand what this is all about in just a moment. There's many who have taken a journey into what they think is salvation, but it's not the full journey that God has prescribed for those who are called by the name of Jesus Christ. And so they are relegated largely to a place of ineffectiveness in their generation.

But for those of us who are willing to take this journey to the other side of the cross, there is something on the other side of this walk with Jesus Christ that will absolutely bring his name to glory through every surrendered vessel. Now this journey is not really for the strong, it's a journey for the weak. It's hard to imagine that.

The strong take a longer time to get to where the weak need to go in Christ, because the promises of him, it's through him, it's in him, it's something that God alone can do. We come to Christ through the cross. But the gospel of Matthew, let me start there in chapter 16, verses 24 and 25, Jesus said these words, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it. Whoever who loses his life for my sake will find it. Now there's a lot of different ways that you can look at it, but over the years, this is the way this particular verse has seemed to stand out to me.

This is what I believe that Jesus Christ is actually saying, whoever seeks to save a brief moment of whatsoever he or she has left of personal dignity by avoiding the mockery of those who don't believe that supernatural life is possible will forfeit the future that God has in store for them. In other words, there is a place that we will have to go that nobody in this world wants to go without God. They mock this place.

They don't believe there's any power there. They don't see any virtue to it. They don't see the victory in it, and they will actually laugh at you for believing that it's a pathway of incredible life and power in God.

It's the journey to the other side of the cross. There's a time when everyone who has taken up the challenge to follow Jesus will experience what many have called over the years a dark night of the soul, a night when everything seems to, it doesn't make sense anymore, when you thought life was going to evolve a certain way and it doesn't work that way. God is doing something that you may not necessarily understand.

Psalms 22 in the Old Testament is a psalm where God in his mercy allows a man called David, who is already destined to be the king of Israel, experience this dark night of the soul. And when you read it, you begin to understand. He could have no way of knowing that the Spirit of God was actually allowing him to experience the anguish of the Son of God, who's not yet born on the cross, where he was crucified for our redemption.

It's this psalm that Jesus Christ quotes on the cross, and it's amazing to think that there's somebody many, many years before actually experiencing this journey to the other side of the cross. Remember, he's on a journey to be a ruler. He's on a journey to have an effect.

He's on a journey to be a man that we talk about today as somebody who slayed a giant, somebody who had the ability to write beautiful psalms of worship to God, somebody who became a king. And even through his mistakes, he's still remembered as a man after God's own heart. But at a certain season, as he's being led on this journey, which you and I are going to undertake in our time, don't think it's a strange thing, Peter said, the fiery trial that's to try you.

Don't think that the journey that God has for those that he's about to use and do a new thing is a strange journey. It might be strange to a generation that's raised to think that everything and everything is all about me. It's all about my life.

It's about my liberty. It's about my happiness. And if it doesn't feel good, it obviously can't be God.

That's not true. That's not true. The thoughts of God are higher than our thoughts.

The ways of God are higher than our ways. We don't fully understand the ways of God. That's why in Proverbs it tells us, don't lean on your own understanding.

But in all your ways, acknowledge him. Acknowledge your ways. Say, God, I know you're in this.

I may not understand it, but I know you're in it. I do believe that all things work together for good because I do love you. And I believe that I'm called according to your purpose.

Yet it doesn't make sense to my natural mind what's going on around me. And you just find yourself joining the saints throughout the ages who have had the same sentiment only to find out that at the other side of where God was taking them was a life for them that only God could give them. It's a season.

According to Psalm 22, it's a time when God seems far away. Anybody here ever gone through that? Maybe you're going through that tonight. It's just like David said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Now we know this is prophetic.

It's about the cross. But David's experiencing these emotions, anointed by the prophet Samuel. The Holy Spirit would come upon him, he'd be given incredible power, but yet he's being taken on a journey to something deeper, richer.

He's in the lineage of the son of God. He has no way of understanding what's happening to him. Why are you so far from helping me and from the words of my groaning? We all go through this season, this season where we seem to be identifying with the cross of Christ.

God, why are you not with me? Why are you not helping me through this right now? I don't feel like I've ever been farther away or weaker in my life than I am now. And I'm praying, and they're telling me that you're supposed to answer my prayer, but you're not answering it, at least not the way I think you should. He says, my God, in verse two, he says, I cry in the daytime, but you don't hear.

And in the night season, and I'm not silent, why are you not answering my prayers? Is there some secret flaw in me? Is there some fault in my life? Have I displeased you, God? Have I done something that's causing you to draw your hand back from me? And of course, there's no shortage of the enemy's whispers in your ear at this particularly vulnerable time in your life. And then he goes on in verse four and five, and he says, our fathers trusted in you. They trusted and you delivered them.

They cried to you and they were delivered. They trusted in you and they were not ashamed. And we can all point to seasons in our lives when others had the victory, which seems to be denied us for some particular reason.

In some cases, like in our Bible school, it could be somebody across the hall. I mean, how come Paul's always getting the victory? Across the hall, or Lucius, or whatever your name is, and I pray more than he does. And yet he's always coming out every morning.

He's got some new victory, and I come out with some new defeat. I come out with, God, why are you not answering my prayer? Why are others getting victory, which seems to be denied me? Why is my journey seemingly taking so long, and theirs seems to be so short? Verse six, he says, I'm a worm and no man. In other words, my strength is gone.

I'm a reproach of men and despised by the people. It's a type of the person that says, God, nobody wants to be like me, that's for sure. And all those who see me ridicule me.

They shoot out the lip. They shake the head saying, he trusted in the Lord, let him rescue him. Let him deliver him since he delights in him.

Your own strength is gone, and voices are beginning to mock your confidence in God now. Now they're not necessarily exterior audible voices, but they're interior voices. You trusted in God.

So where is he when you need him? Is this whole thing real? Do you have a real relationship with the real God? Are you really chosen to rule and reign with Jesus Christ, or has it all been just a figment of your own imagination? In verse 14, he says, I'm poured out like water. My bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, and it's melted within me.

I'm losing heart. My strength is dried up like a pot's hurt, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws, and you brought me into the dust of death. And it's a type of a person that says, God, I'm losing heart, and I have no strength left.

In verse 17, he says, I count all my bones. They look and stare at me. You divide my garments among them, and for my clothing, they cast lots.

In other words, these demonic voices around me are already predicting my defeat, and they're already taking the spoils of my life. It's amazing. But you see, the whole time, here's the point.

He's on a journey that's prescribed by God. There's no shortcut to the other side of the cross. We'd like to take a shortcut.

We'd like it to be, we're an instant society. We want to put popcorn in the microwave and have it in a minute and a half, have it all ready and smelling and buttered and hot. We want to press a button and something turns on, press another one, something turns off.

And we approach the realm of God like this, not recognizing that God's realm doesn't work that way. There's no instant on and off in the kingdom of God. There's no instant super Christian, may I put it that way, or supernatural Christian.

There's a process that we have to go through. We have to, we first identify with Christ on the cross. That's when we come to him for our salvation, where we begin to die unto ourselves.

But then there's this whole season of our seemingly, I thought I was supposed to get stronger and I'm getting weaker. I thought, I thought I was going to be taken out of all weakness and taken out into all strength. And yet that is true.

It is a promise in the word of God, but the process of getting there is not the way we think it should be. It doesn't happen as fast as we think it should happen. And finally, David says, save me, verse 21, from the lion's mouth and the horns of the wild ox, save me, oh God.

He finally gets to the place in this journey, in a sense, that he's undertaking, which is a type of the cross where he says, it comes down to this, oh, save me, God. I can't save myself. I can't talk my way out of this.

I don't have the strength to get out of this. I can't go into the places that you're calling me to go. I can't be the person that you're calling me to be.

God, you have to come and you have to save me. John, the beloved apostle, he says it this way in John chapter 12 and verses 24 to 26. Most assuredly, Jesus said, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it. See, it's in the same context to the scripture of taking up your cross.

It's a process, may I call it that, of falling into the ground and dying, not loving our life so much that we try to keep something of ourselves still alive, may I put it that way. But he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. And if anyone serves me, let him follow me, for where I am, there my servant will be also.

And if anyone serves me, him will my father honor. We identify through the cross with Jesus Christ in his death. Actually, the scripture says when we're baptized, we are identifying with his death, that also we may identify with his resurrection life.

As he was raised by the spirit of God, so too we will be raised out of death by the spirit of God. Not by power, not by might, not by human intellect, not by anything we do. But when we get to the place, to this journey on the other side of the cross where we just say, God save me, God raise me, God use my life for your glory.

When we finally come to the place where we say, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. There's no chance for me to come out of the grave unless you raise me out of the grave. See, that's where the other side of the cross is.

We have our salvation, then we undertake a journey and by God's grace, he brings us to the end of ourselves as much as he did his son, as much as he did King David before he was able to rule and reign in his generation. You and I in our generation are about to be taken on a journey to the other side of the cross for there is no power anywhere else. There is no influence anywhere else.

There is no spiritual awakening anywhere else. God has to have a people that are empowered by his Holy Spirit one more time, raised out of weakness and brought into his strength, given spiritual sight by the Spirit of God, freedom by the Spirit of God, a victory, a word, a reason to live, giftings of God by the Spirit of God, not by human effort, not by human might, not by human power, but by the Spirit of God. See, that's why this message applies to you too who are online tonight.

You are sitting there weak, you know you can't go anywhere, you can't even get up in the morning by yourself. You are a candidate for this incredible miracle, this incredible journey into this newness of life in Jesus Christ. David finishes this whole, in a sense, identification with the cross in verse 21 by saying, save me from the lion's mouth, the enemy, the devil who goes around like a roaring lion trying to devour my confidence in God, trying to devour my future, devour my strength, devour my use ability for God's kingdom, save me from these voices, oh God, save me.

And then, at the end of verse 21, something happens, it's like a light goes on, and he says, you have answered me, it's amazing. It's such a transition, there's no bridge in it. Usually if you're going from one place to another, there's a bridge.

If you do it in a song, there's a bridge, if you do it in a poem, there's a bridge. But in Psalm 22, there is no bridge. When he gets to the point where he says, save me, he says, you've answered me.

It's like a revelation, it's like a light goes on. And then he goes on, he says, I will declare your name to my brethren. In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you.

That's what some of you and prayerfully all of you will do in the days ahead. That's what you will do online. You will come to the house of God and you will declare the name of Jesus Christ among your brethren.

I was dead, but now I'm alive. I was weak, but he has given me strength. I was blind, but now I see.

I was lame, now I can walk and dance and praise him. I was dead, and now I live by the spirit of Almighty God that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. I too have been raised into newness of life by the spirit of God.

Think it, not a strange thing, this journey. It's not a strange thing. It is the way of God.

There is no quick route to the life that God wants to give each one of us in Christ Jesus. And by God's grace, we're going to get rid of this powerless, instant Christianity in this generation. And we're going to take the journey one more time, hallelujah to the Lamb of God, hallelujah.

And when we begin to praise him, as David says, there's going to be others that are going to say, whatever God did for you, I want him to do that for me. I'm tired of being in this place too. I don't want to play the game anymore.

I'm tired of pretending I got victory. I want victory. I want the real victory.

I want the real power. I want the real life that God sent his son to die on a cross to give to me, not just eternally, but here on the earth as well. He says, all you who fear the Lord, praise him.

You descendants of Jacob, glorify him and fear him, all you offspring of Israel. For he has not despised, verse 24, Psalm 22, nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, nor has he hidden his face from him. But when he cried to him, he heard, he has not despised you.

He's not despised our weakness. He's not despised our confusion. He's not despised our groanings and our sighings.

He's not even despised our questions that we ask. He's not even despised our accusations against his faithfulness. But when we cried, he heard and he answered.

Now you might be, I'm going to speak to the Bible college students for a moment, then I'll speak to you online. You might be facedown in your dorm. You might have memorized the spots in the carpet in your room.

Your face has been down on it so much, but I tell you, when you cried, he heard you. He heard you and he answered you and he gave you a ticket and took you on a journey to the other side of the cross. Hallelujah.

And I tell you, when you get to the other side, you're never going back again. You're never going back to where you came from. You're going to stay on that side of resurrection life.

When he cried to him, he heard and he says, my praise will be of you in the great assembly. I will pay my vows before those who fear him. Verse 26, it says, the poor shall eat and be satisfied and those who seek

him will praise the Lord.

Let your heart live forever. This is the man who has just started up by saying, my God, why have you forsaken me? Suddenly he's in this great assembly. God by his spirit has taken him into an understanding of where his life is going to lead.

I'm going to a place where many people are going to be gathered and I will declare your greatness and your goodness before them. And those who are poor, those who are weak, those who are struggling, those who aren't strong will eat and be satisfied. And I will say to them, let your heart live forever.

I say to you tonight online, if you, you know, if you're the weakest of the weak tonight listening, you're way ahead of those who are strong because the strong have to die before they can know this. You're way ahead of them. Do you understand? The kingdom of God is upside down.

Think of the way the world does things. God does it and flip it upside down. Generally in the world, the strong get somewhere first, but in God's kingdom, the weak get there first.

Come all ye who, come ye lame, come ye maimed, come you blind, never through Isaiah. Come by wine and honey without money and without price. Praise be to God.

Then suddenly it just starts to make sense. Isaiah, the prophet talked about this coming Messiah and he made an incredible statement that I love. And he talks about the riches that are going to be made available to humanity through him.

And he said, he makes a statement. He said, and the lame will take the prey. In other words, where those who are still strong in themselves are, are trying to figure it all out.

The guy who can't walk is going to crawl through with his hands. He's going to get touched and get healed. The lame take the prey.

They get the victory. The people who know that this has all got to be God and it's not going to be me. And then he goes even deeper and he says, all the ends of the world will turn to the Lord.

All the families of the nations will worship before you. For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules among the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship.

All those who go down to the dust shall bow before him. A posterity, verse 30, shall, which means a seed, shall serve him. It shall be recounted to the Lord to the next generation.

In other words, God's saying, I will always have a people, I will always have a seed. Remember, unless the seed, what, falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. But if it dies, if it identifies with the cross of Christ, if it comes to the place where the son of God came to, he could not raise himself.

Do you understand? Father into thy hands, I commit my spirit. He was going into the grave as the son of God and he knew his father had to raise him. And we identify with him through the cross and through baptism, the scripture says, we identify with his death.

But by the spirit of God, we are raised from the dead on the other side of the cross. Hallelujah. When we get to the point where it's none of me and all of Jesus, it's so simple, but it takes us so long to get there.

We're so stubborn. We're always looking inside this garbage can we call the human body, looking for something good to present to God. And until we get to the place where Paul says, I'm convinced that within me dwells no good thing.

In other words, apart from Christ, there's nothing inside of me to present to God. There's nothing in me that can build his kingdom. Aren't you glad that the ground is level at the cross of Jesus Christ? Aren't you glad that it's a whosoever will gospel? It's not just to the strong and the weak are not barred from coming there.

It's not just for the wise. It's for all who call on the name of Jesus Christ. A posterity will serve him.

A seed will serve him. It will be recounted to the Lord to the next generation. They will come and declare his righteousness to a people who will be born, that he has done this.

There's a seed that will declare the faithfulness of God to another generation. We're about to know a spiritual awakening in our time, a real one. It's not just getting excited.

That's a good thing. Thank God for excitement. It's not just singing louder, clapping more, reading longer.

Oh no, oh no, oh no. It's being raised from the dead. It's being given life that only God can give.

It's being taken into places only God can take us. It's when we get to church and it's like, Jesus, thank you. And somebody's standing next to you and saying, what does he got that I don't have? A seed will come.

A seed will be born that will declare this to the next generation to a people yet to be born that he has done this. Behold, I will do an old thing new. May I put it that way.

I've done it before and I will do it again. When Jesus went into the waters of baptism, I love the account that says, he said, father, glorify your name. And the voice came from heaven says, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

So here we are. My prayer lately has been, God, glorify your name again. Glorify your name one more time.

And thank you, Lord, for taking me on a journey that I don't always understand. I don't always like the journey. It's painful.

I don't like being mocked. I don't like the voices challenging your integrity. I don't like the fact that I'm tempted to even give in sometimes to them.

But nevertheless, you haven't despised me. I cried out to you because when I did, you heard me. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Young people take the journey. Take the journey.

Die to live. Let it, trust him. He's faithful.

He knows what needs to happen. You know, when you take up your cross, you know, a lot of people think that that's something I have to do. Well, I'll tell you, you can nail your feet in one hand, but then you're stuck with a free hand and a hammer.

Even Jesus has to do that. He's got to do it all. He's got to, he's got to put us down so he can raise us up.

May I put it that way? But on the other side of the cross, and I, I, I live in measure there. I'm not, as Paul said, I'm never, none of us are ever fully there to what we're called to be. But I know I have a glimpse of it now and it's an amazing place to live on the other side of the cross when everything is, is all about Jesus.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Fathers, thank you, God, for people tonight, Lord, that are listening online that will take the journey in the days ahead.

They'll not consider it a strange thing, the way you choose to redeem those that you love. They'll open their hearts and they will let you to come in to be their Lord and their Savior. No matter what that looks like, your Bible tells us that everything you do has a purpose.

And so God, we release ourselves into your hands as Jesus did on the cross when he said, Father, into your hands, I, I commit my spirit. We do the same thing tonight, Lord, we open our hearts to you. If, if you would pray that prayer with me online tonight and we'll pray it along with you here in the sanctuary, just for your sake, but just open your mouth now with me.

You don't have to understand it all. Just say these words, Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for loving me enough that you came and died for me to pay the price for the wrong I've done so that I don't have to be separated from God anymore.

And you have promised to forgive me. You promised that heaven would be my home when I die. And you promised to give me a reason to live while I live on this earth.

So today I come to you at the cross and I ask you to come into my life. Be my Lord and my savior and my God. Jesus, thank you for loving me and you will help me to love you.

Now take me on the journey that I've heard about tonight. Help me to trust you because you're going to make my life into something that brings glory to your name. Thank you.

From this day forward, I am a child of God. In Jesus' name, amen and amen. Praise God.

Praise God. Yes, go ahead. If you prayed that tonight, would you just text the word DECIDED to 51,000? Just an act of faith.

Just go ahead and do it. Just text the word DECIDED to 51,000 and somebody from Times Square Church will be connecting you to a video that'll help you to know how to grow in this new understanding of your relationship with God. Want you to know that you're deeply, deeply loved tonight.

We're going to have communion together and communion is we're going to celebrate what Jesus did for us on the cross. We're going to celebrate the life that he invited us into eternally and while we live on this side of eternity. And as we take communion, just open your heart to the love of God in a new and a fresh way.

Get up with us and take the journey because God is doing a new thing. Take the journey with us. It's going to be an amazing journey.

Oh, you'll be mocked. There'll be some who laugh. There'll be others who say, what are you talking about? You'll always be the way you are.

There'll be seasons where you feel like you're far from God or God's far from you, but just you got to just trust God through all of that because the promises on the other side, you'll be in the midst of the assembly. You'll be singing a song that causes people to say, wow, only God could have done this in that person's life. That will be you.

That will be you. I'm talking to you who are addicted and afflicted and depressed. You feel like nobody.

You feel like nothing. You watch what God is going to do in your life. You watch it.

He's done it before and he will do it again because in our generation God is doing a new thing.

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