

The Man Who Comes After the King

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's wisdom and faithfulness during trials, as exemplified by Solomon's life and the speaker's personal experiences.

Duration: 1:09:43

Scripture: Proverbs 4:1

Topics: "King"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living out the truth of God's word. He highlights the tragic reality of a generation that possesses truth but fails to embrace and live it. The speaker addresses the younger generation and college-age individuals, urging them to take up the responsibility of carrying the truth to the next generation. He warns that if truth is not internalized and embraced, it can become a judge that crucifies the Son of God. The sermon references Proverbs chapter 4 and the book of Ecclesiastes to emphasize the significance of understanding and obeying God's commandments.

Transcript

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

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. The last year and a half I have really battled with illness.

I was exposed to a toxic substance that infected my lungs. And it really was a difficult year and a half to say the least. Difficult to breathe, no energy, headaches all the time.

And really, in some cases, I saw one of the best specialists in all of the United States. I went to see this particular doctor that specializes in this. And he basically told me, he said, in two years you'll know what level of disability you're going to settle in at.

He didn't say you'd be healed. He said you basically, your body will heal itself to the point where this scarring is in your lungs. And you will have to learn to live at that level of disability, whatever that is.

And so it's been a difficult year and a half. In that year and a half, through these difficult times, you know, the Bible says that all things work together for good. And very often the outcome of whatever comes into our lives is determined by how we see God in the midst of our trial.

And I made a choice years ago to see Him as faithful even when I don't understand Him. Because the Bible does say all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. And I believe that.

And over the course of the last year and a half, the Lord has given me some nice songs. I think they're nice anyway. I mean, I really enjoy singing them.

They were gifts to me from the Holy Ghost. In some of the hardest times, in some of the days when I'd get up and have to put an oxygen mask on my face before I could do my devotions. And have to breathe into that thing for five or ten minutes so that the headaches would go away so that I could begin to enjoy reading my Bible.

And it was in these times that it's as if the pen of the Holy Ghost, He just started speaking to my heart and I just started writing it down. And started writing songs like, if you've lost your heaven song. And when I don't understand the way that He leads, it's then that He whispers with heaven sweet love and tells me forever He's there.

And all of these songs, and now about twelve, sixteen days ago now, Pastor David had suggested that I make a CD of these songs. So we began to do that. I was in the studio and started out the first song, which is I Love You Jesus.

That was written quite a few years ago. And I started singing it and I couldn't do it. I mean, I just simply couldn't hit the notes anymore that I used to a few years ago.

I was trying to tell the arrangers that, but it just seemed nobody was listening to me. Got into the studio and as I suspected, I can't hit the notes anymore in this particular song. So everybody kind of looked at me and hummed and hawed and wondered, well, should we carry on? Should we go home? It was a little bit embarrassing perhaps for them not knowing really what to do.

And I said, no, I want to keep on singing. So we went into the studio and just began. So this particular song I think will always be special to me because it's the song I was singing when God healed me.

And folks, listen, my whole prayer life wasn't about healing. The whole year and a half, I may have asked once or twice, really? I never asked that many times to be healed because my prayer life is not about being healed. It's about being used of God.

But you know what? We have to understand something. Sometimes as human vessels, the Bible says that we're filled with living water. But like sponges, we soak it all up to ourselves.

And God in his goodness sometimes has to come and just give that sponge a little bit of a squeeze for the stranger that goes by. And some songs came out of that time of squeezing in my life that I'm hoping are going to be a blessing for people for many, many years to come. Especially the struggling saints, especially the people that the enemy has got convinced perhaps that they're just not going to make it.

And I'm hoping with all my heart that these songs will be an encouragement to them. But this one is an encouragement to me because it was the one I was singing when I was touched with the Holy Ghost. And I wasn't even aware that God had touched me until the song was over.

And the fellows that were running the technical side of recording said, What happened to you? What happened to your voice? The longer you sang, the stronger you got. The different notes you began. I wasn't even aware of it.

Folks, that was at about, on a Friday night, I guess probably somewhere around 8 o'clock. We sang until 1.30 in the morning and really had to quit. I was so full of the joy of the Lord and hit some notes that I haven't hit in years and had to stop just because I felt I better not push this thing over the edge.

We came back in the next day, sang for another six or seven hours. And then that Sunday morning, I don't know if you remember that Sunday morning, but I just could not but worship God and shout and sing to the Lord. And it's been 16 days, 16 days of breathing without oxygen, 16 days of health.

I look back on the last year and a half, and I have to say it's been a good year and a half. Because there have been things done in my life that apart from tribulation wouldn't have happened. There are deep workings that come into the heart in times of trial that those who live on the mountaintop know nothing about and may never fully understand these things.

There's a whole lot more of us in us than we realize. God in His graciousness, when we call out to Him and say, Oh, all of Jesus and none of me, and the Holy Ghost says, Okay, that's the way you want it. And He just reaches down and squeezes the clay and says, We'll just see about that.

There's a little bit more of you there than needs to be. God is so good. God is so good to us.

I want to share this song with you just because it's special to me. God has been so good to me. It's just simply called, In the Quiet Times.

And I think He healed me here for a reason, because this is part of what God's been speaking to my life. Life gets so busy. Ministry gets so busy.

Occupies so much of your time. Takes you so much away from the source of your strength. And God in His goodness will take everything else away that we will come back to Him again.

And teach us one more time about what it means to be quiet in His presence and give that quality time to Him that He deserves. I've had some wonderful prayer times of late. Just marvelous, marvelous times of prayer.

The only thing wrong with me physically is I limp now. Isn't that amazing? I think Jacob had a similar problem. For whatever reason, I have a problem with my hip and my leg down to my knee.

My thigh and my hip seem to be out of joint. I don't know. I'm not even going to go to the doctor.

I really don't care. That's really up to God. It takes a while.

It takes a while. But when I walk for a while, it goes away. But it's just a nice tender reminder that our source of life and strength is in Christ.

Sometimes the world seems to set me free. And as the two men who walked on the road to Emmaus, let God's Word burn in our hearts tonight. Show us and speak to us.

Turn one more page, O God, in the knowledge of eternity. And speak it into our hearts. Let your kingdom come and your will be done.

Father, I thank you for this. I thank you that you will accomplish wonderful things in this house tonight. I believe it with all my heart.

In Jesus' name. Ecclesiastes, the man who comes after the king. Chapter 2, verse 11 and 12.

Now this is Solomon. Writing, as they say, at the end of his life. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and on the labor that I had labored to do.

And behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. And there was no profit under the sun. And I turned myself to behold wisdom and madness and folly.

For what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which has been already done. The man who comes after the king. Now listen.

Solomon is a man who undoubtedly and inarguably was given by God incredible wisdom and knowledge. God himself said in 2 Chronicles 1, verse 12. He said to Solomon, he said, Wisdom and knowledge is granted to thee.

And I will give thee riches and wealth and honor such as none of the kings have had before thee. And neither shall there any after thee have the like. God said, Solomon, I'm going to give you knowledge.

I'm going to give you wisdom. I'm going to pour into your life. Such incredible wealth.

Not only of the things that the earth can supply, but heaven's wealth. You see, beloved, we've got to understand that the Bible is God's wealth. It's the wealth of heaven.

This written word of God. And just like God poured it into Solomon. Every time we open this book.

Every time we sit in the house of God. And are listening to the word of God being spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This is God's wealth of heaven now being poured out.

Just as it was to Solomon. Now God has the same wisdom. It's not an exclusive gift anymore.

The apostle in the New Testament says if any man lacks wisdom. Let him ask God who doesn't withhold and gives freely to all. And it will be given him.

But let him ask in faith. Nothing wavering. Let him ask.

And God says, I will give you wisdom. I will. I'll not withhold it if you want it.

Solomon took this incredible knowledge. And this knowledge should have been used to bring both himself and those under his authority. Into an incredible life which God offers to those that are his.

Incredible freedom. Magnificent borders of protection that God would provide. And instead he undertook a lower pursuit.

And it's one that eventually led to his own downfall. And you have to understand that Solomon is the one who set the stage for the defeat of Israel. It was because of Solomon's backsliding.

That after his reign the kingdom was divided between the northern and the southern kingdoms. And the stage was now set for the Assyrian Empire to come and swallow the northern kingdom. And Babylon to come and as it is swallow the southern kingdom.

The northern kingdom was essentially never heard of again. Assimilated. Swallowed.

By the heathen nations all around them. But it's Solomon's backsliding that set the stage for this. If there is a single figure you can point to in scripture.

That we could say that this one man's lower pursuit as it is. Set the stage for the defeat of those under his authority. It was Solomon.

Now the Bible tells us what the cornerstone of Solomon's failure was. It's the life that he began to build for himself. And it's found in Ecclesiastes again chapter 1 and verse 13.

Now verse 12. He said, I the preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. Not only a king as it is but he calls himself a preacher as well.

Everyone who teaches in any capacity or extrapolates as it is or gives further the word of God. Is truly a preacher. He said, I was king over Israel in Jerusalem and I gave my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom.

Concerning all things that are done under heaven. This sort travaileth God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. Now here was Solomon's mistake.

God gave him wisdom and he took that wisdom to search out things out of his own mouth. He says that are under heaven. If you look at the original Hebrew text the word under just means beneath, below.

He said he could have used that wisdom to search out things that would have given life to him and to all the people under his authority. But instead he took the wisdom of God. And instead of looking up he looked ahead.

He looked to the things around him to find satisfaction, to find meaning and purpose. He looked in the world in a sense to find his satisfaction. All the wisdom that God gave him never caused him to look up.

He looked all around and he did as it is a search under heaven. And spent his whole life trying to find meaning. Using the wisdom that God had given him for a faulty pursuit.

Listen to the miserable life. He said I've seen all the works, verse 14, that are done, chapter 1, under the sun. And behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

And at the end of his life he looked back on a trail of emptiness. If there's anything in my heart that would cause me to fear it would be this thing. You see, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

And I believe in my heart that the basis of the fear of the Lord is the understanding that God will not be mocked and his kingdom cannot be played with. We cannot toy with truth without suffering the consequences of it. It may not be immediate.

It may even look like we're having a good life. It may look like everything is going well until you get to the end. And at the end you look back and he says, oh, it's just empty.

It was just an empty, selfish pursuit. And in spite of all he had, in spite of all he possessed, there was nothing there that was lasting. There was nothing that the people around him could even hold to.

He had allowed the presence of God to drain as it is through his fingers like sand. And he's left at the end looking back and saying, what is life all about? Chapter 2, he said, I said in my heart, verse 1, he said, go to now and I will prove thee with mirth. Therefore, enjoy pleasure.

And behold, this also is vanity. Now, I've read this in different translations. And I'm going to paraphrase it as basically as Solomon said, the first thing I did is I just sought out enjoyment.

I used the knowledge of God. And with the knowledge that God was giving me, I headed out to find pleasure and enjoyment in this world. And this is vanity.

I didn't find it. I searched. And, you know, there are seasons.

And Solomon could rightly say there were seasons where there was conceivably some joy, some fulfillment. But nothing lasted. That's why he says it's all vanity.

It's not lasting. It's a faulty foundation. It doesn't matter how high you build the wall, it eventually falls over.

I said of laughter, it is mad. And of mirth, what doeth it? Verse 3, he said, I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, and yet acquainting my heart with wisdom. I find that particular statement a little bit of, they call it an oxymoron.

Two things that shouldn't go together. I sought to give my heart to wine, and yet acquainting myself with wisdom. You ever notice when somebody is half in the bag with alcohol how wise they are in their own sight? All the theories they have about life and people and politics and governments.

And the more they drink, the wiser they get. In their own sight, they can be babbling on like absolute fools. But as far as they're concerned, they're ready to get up and give a political speech before thousands.

Solomon says, I thought maybe I'd drink a bit. How many Solomons are in the church today? That God pours out heaven. God opens heaven.

And he talks about new life in Christ. And he talks about destiny and purpose. He talks about a beloved bride.

He talks about where he wants to take us. And there are no limitations to what God can do. And we have this knowledge.

He releases and reveals the covenant, his power, his blood. And how many are there in the church today that take that knowledge, that wisdom of God, and try to add a glass of wine to it? And still, even knowing these things, follow the same path as a man who ends up empty at the end of his days. Nothing more confusing than a babbling, wine-sipping, divided-hearted Christian.

And he said, and then I sought to lay hold on folly until I might see that good for the sons of man, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. He said, now, I turned myself to wine, yet still

keeping my wisdom. And he said, I thought I'd add to it a little bit of stupidity, foolishness.

If it was Solomon in our day, he said, well, I thought I'd visit a few comedy clubs. I thought perhaps I'd turn into some television shows that are just idiotic buffoons from beginning to end. And I would watch them and laugh with them.

And see if happiness can be found there. You know, it's funny, there are so many people today that live exactly like that. Come to Times Square Church and sit here, and you're given the wisdom of heaven.

And then go home, pull a beer out of the fridge, and then turn on the televisions and watch some idiotic sitcom. Doing the very same thing that Solomon did, with the wisdom of God. I made me great works, I built houses, I planted vineyards, I made gardens, verse 5, and orchards.

I planted trees of all kinds of fruits. I made pools of water, the water there with the wood that brings forth trees. I got servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house.

I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered silver, gold, peculiar treasure of kings and of provinces. I got men singers and women singers.

The delights of the sons of men, musical instruments of all sorts. And so I was great and increased more than all they that were before me in Jerusalem. And also my wisdom remained with me.

In other words, the Word of God was still in me. I was pursuing all these things, but God's Word was still in me. I still had an understanding of truth.

Whatsoever my eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy. For my heart rejoiced in all my labor, and this was my portion of all my labor.

Verse 11, Then I looked on the works of my hands they had brought. And on the labor I labored to do, and all was vanity and vexation of spirit. And there was no prophet under the sun.

And I turned myself to behold wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do that comes after the king, even that which has been already done? Solomon just simply says this. Tell me now, what can you do that I haven't done? Where can you look for happiness in this world that I haven't looked? What can you build that I haven't built? What can you listen to that I haven't listened to? What relationships can you enter into that I haven't had? And he said, I've come to the end, and it's all empty.

At the end of his life, his pursuit left him with wrong theology and unanswered questions. And that's exactly what wrong pursuits will do. Nothing more dangerous than giving truth to a man or woman with a divided heart.

Let me tell you why. Because at the end of their life, oftentimes the church will set them up and they become the teachers of the next generation. And all that's left in a man or woman with a divided heart is wrong theology and unanswered questions.

Ecclesiastes 1.10. Listen now to the theology of Solomon. He said, Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. Is there anything, Solomon says, that can be said, This is new? Yet lamentations Jeremiah the prophet writes in chapter 3. He said, It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

Verse 23 says, They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. Yes, we can look at the world and say, Is there anything out there that is new? Is there any show that comes to Broadway that hasn't already passed this way before? The same idiotic things are in every show.

It doesn't matter which one we go to watch. It's all the same. A hundred years from now, if the Lord tarries, will it ever be different than it is today? No, it won't be.

Is there anything, he says, that can be said, This is new? You see, if he had been looking in the right direction, that would not have been his theology. His theology would have been, If you will look to God, there are mercies for you every morning that are brand new. If you look heavenward, you get out of bed and you say, God, I can hardly wait for the day.

I can hardly wait for what the day is going to bring, because I may not be aware of it, but when my eyes opened this morning, there was a new mercy of God upon my life. Ecclesiastes 1.15, listen to what he says again. That which is crooked cannot be made straight.

And that which is wanting cannot be numbered. Another translation says that which is missing cannot be recovered. That's incredible, isn't it? To spend a life with the wisdom of God and come to this conclusion.

The crooked can't be made straight, and that which is missing cannot be recovered. Obviously, he had no vision of Christ. Listen to what Zephaniah said in chapter 3, verse 19.

God says at that time, I will undo all that afflict thee. And I will save, or that means Yahshua, or set free her that halts, or is crooked. And gather her that was driven out.

And I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. Solomon says, is there any possibility the crooked be made straight? And God says, oh yes, I can make the crooked straight. I can save to the uttermost those who are curved.

Those who have been warped by sin and what society has laid upon them. Or whatever their situation in life might be. But God says, I will gather you out of, you will put your trust in me.

And I will so touch you that there will be a fame of you in every land. In every place you go there will be a fame of my presence on your life. Again, chapter 3, verse 22.

Solomon said, wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than a man should rejoice in his own works. For that is his portion. And who shall bring him to see what shall be after him? Let me read this to you from another translation of the Bible.

I saw that there is nothing better for people than to be happy in their work. This is why they are here. Now listen to this statement.

No one will bring them back from death to enjoy life in the future. Isn't that amazing? A man with the wisdom of God. Do you ever notice theologians with divided hearts come to the same conclusions? No one will bring them back from death to enjoy life in the future.

You see, he had never had access to the same God that Ezekiel had access to. Because God spoke to Ezekiel these words. Prophecy and say to them, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and I will cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

And you shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. And shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land, and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord. God says, yes, I'm well able.

I'm well able to take you out of the grave in this life, even while you still live. And after you die, a day is coming. And those who have walked with me, there is a trumpet that's going to sound.

The dead in Christ are going to rise first. And we who are alive and remain are going to be gathered together with them in the clouds. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

To do what? To rule and to reign for all of eternity. To be brought into unspeakable joy, ever-increasing knowledge, a place of no more sorrow. We sing about it, no more pain, no more torment, no more tears.

When we look back and see it wasn't all vanity to walk with Jesus Christ. There was an end, there was a purpose, there was life in it. The end of his life.

Again, Ecclesiastes chapter 2, verse 17. Solomon said, and I guess this really sums it up. I hated life, because the work that is wrought unto the Son is grievous unto me, for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Verse 15 he says, as it happened to the fool, so it happened to me. And why then was I more wise? Then I said in my heart, this also is vanity. The very same thing that happens to the fool, Solomon said, happened to me.

It's too bad he didn't have the courage to say he was a fool. He still considered himself wise, even though his life was empty. Even though he had no heritage for his children, and those that God had entrusted to his care, he still considered himself a wise man.

Because he had the knowledge of God. But beloved, listen. The knowledge of God, without any kind of a personal application, is absolutely worthless to you.

Jesus said, if the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. If truth is revealed, and that truth is not embraced, if that truth doesn't begin to sit on the throne of the heart, then all it does is turn as a judge, in a sense, to you. Where do we go once we've heard the words of the Lord? Truth that is not internalized will end up crucifying the Son of God.

The Pharisees of Christ's generation, when you look back at their history, they didn't start out attempting to be wicked. They wanted to be the strict keepers of the law. And they had the revealed written word of that generation as much as was in their hands.

They had it memorized, literally. Line by line, comma by comma, dot by dot. And when God Almighty came, they crucified Him.

Proverbs chapter 4. Turn there with me, please. Proverbs chapter 4. Listen now to the words that Solomon wrote. I wanted to start at the end of his life and now go back to the beginning.

Proverbs chapter 4. He wrote, Hear you children the instruction of a father, and attend to no understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake you not my law. Verse 3. I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

He taught me also and said unto me, let thine heart retain my words, and keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding, forget it not, and neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee.

Love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom. And with all thy getting, get understanding.

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee. She shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straightened, and when thou runnest, thou shall not stumble.

Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go, keep her, for she is thy life. Folks, you have to understand, this is the Holy Spirit speaking to Solomon. And Solomon is writing the Bible, he's writing the words we're reading today, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's speaking to him, and he's writing it down. But the words that he's writing down are not getting a foothold in his heart. He's a man who's learned, he's divinely taught.

But as Paul said in 2 Timothy 3.7, Ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. That means a knowledge which lays claim and exerts an influence upon the person. Ever learning, but not opening his heart to what he's learning.

Not understanding the fact that God doesn't speak just to be heard. Folks, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. In this house tonight, those that have sat and you've been part of Times Square Church, I'll tell you something, clearly, you are either progressing to life in Christ, or you are regressing to a life of disaster at the end.

You are not standing still tonight. Based on how we hear, Jesus himself said, Take heed how you hear, for he who has more will be given, and he who has not, even that which he thinks he has, will be taken away from him. At the end of his life, Solomon says, he that increases knowledge increases sorrow.

That's false theology! The increase of knowledge does not increase sorrow. Jesus said in John 8.32, You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. The increase of knowledge, as God gives it into our hearts, should bring a shout of joy! It should bring an abandonment.

It should bring an absolute sense of God's glory and purpose and faithfulness. Hallelujah! It should put a bounce in your step, and joy in your song, and an understanding that God is working a purpose in our lives, whether we understand it or not. At the end of Ecclesiastes, there are commentators that use Solomon's last line as an argument that he repented and somehow went to heaven.

I don't necessarily believe it. He writes all of these chapters in Ecclesiastes, and at the very end, he says this is the sum total of everything. Fear God, and keep his commandment.

Now, folks, that was as sarcastic as you can possibly get. I am convinced that was written in pure sarcasm. At the end of his life, because he spends no time on it.

He doesn't understand it. If it truly was foundational in his life, there would have been three or four more chapters in Ecclesiastes. No, he says, everything down here is worthless, so you might as well live for God.

That's basically what he was saying. How many now there are who look back on life with sorrow, even in the church of Jesus Christ. After years of Bible study and church attendance, they look back with more questions and confusion than answers.

Like Solomon. And here's the key. You've got to hear me now.

I'll speak it softly. They take the knowledge of God and try to fit it into a lower pursuit. They take all that God is revealing, and instead of yielding to truth and letting truth lead them, they attempt to lead truth into their careers, into their objectives, their pursuits in life.

And instead of truth forming them, they attempt to form the truth and manipulate the truth. But, folks, God will not be mocked. At the end of their lives, they end up hard, bitter, critical and joyless.

And I've seen this because I've traveled. I've been in churches where those that have been the longest in the Lord are like brittle clay. Sit there, unmoved.

They don't worship anymore. They're not like Brother Bredesen tonight, just full of God. No, they're hardly moved.

As a matter of fact, they're not moved. They're not moved by any song. They're not moved by any testimony.

They might as well buy T-shirts. Been there, seen that, done that. They despise every young Christian that rises up with any amount of life.

They're bitter and critical of every pastor that comes in the pulpit that has any sense of God upon him. They didn't just get that way, folks. It was a long journey that took them there.

One man tried to perhaps fit God into his business. Another man tried to fit God into relationships. I had a man in my office one day who attended this church, and I pleaded with him.

I did everything but grabbed by the jacket and shake him. Listen to me. The Holy Ghost gave me a word for him.

I said, I'm going to show you your life. You've got a choice to make. This man was going to leave his wife and little children for no reason but selfishness in his heart.

And I said, now I'm going to show you your life. And I sat him down. I said, here's your two paths before you.

I felt the Spirit of God come upon me in that office, and I pleaded with him. I begged him to walk God's way, but he made another choice. And today, the very same thing that I spoke to his heart is now happening in his life.

I told him, it's going to be a bitter end for you. It's going to be a terrible end of torment and regret and drunkenness. I said, you're going to call your kids at Christmas time like a slobbering fool on the

telephone, half drunk, asking their forgiveness.

Just like your father did to you. Paul says, if you're risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. For Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above and not on things of the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Paul says, if you belong to Christ, your affections must turn heavenward.

There's an evidence of belonging to Christ. I don't know how many years I have left, but I can tell you one thing. I want those years to count for God's glory.

Now, don't clap. I want them to count for God's glory. Live or die.

I don't want to be an old man looking back, saying it was all vanity, because it's too late to change it then. It was worth nothing. The things I built, and I pursued, and I set my heart and affections on, ruined my life and my family.

Brought reproach to the name of Christ. And it's all vanity and vexation of spirit. Solomon wrote, he said himself, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

And then he writes these incredible words in Proverbs 1.80, he said, My son, hear the instruction of thy father. Now, this is the Holy Ghost speaking to Solomon. David the king was Solomon's father, and the Holy Spirit is saying, My son, hear the instruction of your father.

Now, what was God trying to get through? Go with me to 1 Chronicles chapter 8. 28, rather. 1 Chronicles 28. Go back in your Bible.

Hear the instruction of your father. Now, in 1 Chronicles chapter 28, David the king is assembling all the princes of Israel, the tribes, the captains, the companies, everybody together. This is now near the end of his life and his kingship.

And he gathered together everybody, and he stood up on his feet, and he said, Hear my brethren and my people. And he began to speak. Now, Solomon is there.

You have to understand, just like you are here tonight in Times Square Church, Solomon is there. And he's hearing now the Holy Ghost speaking to his father, David. But he can't hear it.

And David begins, he starts by addressing the multitudes. And then in verse 6 in 1 Chronicles 28, And he said unto me, Solomon thy son. Now, David is recounting what God said to him.

He said to me, Solomon thy son. Now, you have to understand, Solomon is there. He shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

Moreover, this is God saying to David, Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments as at this day. You see, at that time, it was in Solomon's heart to obey God. But something turned him.

Folks, I fear success more than I've ever feared failure. Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after

you forever. Verse 9, he says, And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father.

This is David now speaking directly in the crowd. It's as if I had a son that attended this church, and now I've done speaking to the multitude, and I've singled him out and said, Now, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. For the Lord searches all hearts and understanding and all the imaginations of the thoughts.

If thou seek him, he will be found of thee. But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. Take heed now.

David says to Solomon, Listen, for the Lord has chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it. And verse 11 now begins to tell us something.

It says, Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern. Stop right there. David gave to Solomon his son the pattern.

You see, the Bible tells us that David had received the pattern of what God was building by the Holy Ghost. And David knew that what God builds can only come from above. What God builds can't come from this world.

The materials don't come from this world. The strength doesn't come from this world. The life doesn't come from this world.

And David knew that. And David is passing it on now to his son. And he gave him the pattern by the Spirit.

This was his instruction. It's not by might. It's not by power.

Solomon knew well what happened when David numbered the army and began to look away from the Holy One of Israel, the power of God. He knew what happened. He knew the judgment.

And David says, Solomon, it was given to me by God. Everything I have came from God. It all came from above.

Everything I am, everything I've accomplished, the wealth you see around you, everything that is here, the strength, the testimony, it all came from God. Now Solomon built by the pattern of the Spirit. And now David prays near the end of his life, the end of all the instruction.

He gives it all to Solomon. He says, now this is how it's done. Nothing more tragic than a generation that has truth and chooses not to live it.

Where do you go? And what do you say when you get there? You sat in the church where you have been taught the covenant. Heaven is open to this house. And you have been taught truth that can give you life.

And a heritage. And something to pass on to your children. And the power of God to keep your house.

And tell me if you don't live it. At the end of his life, David prayed. Chapter 29, verse 10.

At the end of his message. And he said, wherefore, listen now to David's prayer. Wherefore, David, bless the Lord.

Now Solomon is there. Solomon is there. Just like I have been here.

And I have heard truth that has changed my life. But it is still my choice to walk in it. And Solomon was there.

And Solomon saw his father. He saw his father pray. He saw the generation before him that had known the power of God.

And David prayed. And he said, wherefore, David, bless the Lord. In verse 10, chapter 29.

Before all the congregation and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty. For all that is in heaven and in the earth is thine.

Thine is the kingdom, O Lord. Thou art exalted as head above all. David is saying, O God, great almighty God, everything that we need comes from your hand.

At your feet, at your throne is all power and glory. Everything man seeks, all the victory he needs, the majesty he longs for. Everything in heaven and earth belongs to you.

That is where it is found. It is found in Christ. It is not found in pursuits.

It is not found in a bottle of wine, an idiotic television show, a Broadway production. It is found in Jesus Christ. Both riches, verse 12, and honor come of thee.

Thou reignest over all. And in thine hand is power and might. And in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.

All that we have, everything is found in you, David says. And all that we need comes from your hand. It is all found in you.

Solomon was there, he heard it. Now therefore, our God, verse 13, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. Verse 14, he said, but who am I? And what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sword? For all things come of thee and of thine own have we given thee.

For we are strangers before thee and sojourners as were all our fathers. Our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thy holy name cometh of thy hand and all is thine own.

David said, we've not had the power to achieve the things which have been done. It has all been given to us of God. Everything you've seen, Solomon.

Everything you've heard, you've seen with your eyes and you've heard with your ears. We haven't had a plan. It was given to us by Jehovah God himself.

Open heaven and it was all given to us. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart and has pleasure in uprightness. And as for me, David said, in the uprightness of my heart, I willingly offered all these things and now have I seen with joy thy people which are present here to offer willingly unto thee.

David says, I have followed you, my God, in abandonment. I have followed you in truth and you have been my cheapest delight. And I have sought to build things from above and now I see with joy people around me wanting to do the same.

Just like the Apostle Paul, David, could say, O God, the cheapest delight of my heart is Lord, after me there comes another people who have laid hold of these same truths and they want to build the same kind of a kingdom. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people and prepare their heart unto thee. And give unto Solomon, my son, a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies and thy statutes and to do all these things and to build the palace for which I have made provision.

And David said to the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers and bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord and the King. And verse 23 says, And Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father and prospered and all Israel obeyed him.

Beloved, your turn comes to carry the truth to another generation. We stand. Harold Bredesen has stood here tonight, 83 years of age.

He's carried the torch of truth and God has blessed him and kept him and provided for him all the days of his life. You saw Jack West up to last year standing here, 80 years of age and God blessed him and kept him. What was his message? You've got to be saved and filled with the Holy Ghost.

That's the Christian life. You see Pastor David stand here and you've seen and known the faithfulness of God to those that belong to him. And now you see Pastor Neil, Pastor Patrick and myself standing here.

And I'm speaking specifically now to those that are younger in the Lord and others that are of college age. We will pass away one day and then your turn comes to carry the truth to another generation. The choices that you and I make today determine whether we will look back and see Christ or confusion.

Which is it going to be? It will never be both. When you get back, when you get to the end of your life, this is what I'm more aware of now than I've ever been aware of in my entire life. When I get to the end, whenever that is, when I look back I will see Christ or confusion but not both.

Because God is not the author of confusion. The cry of my heart is Jesus, lead me to life. Open my eyes and show me the joy.

The absolute unspeakable joy of life abandoned to you and surrendered to you. Turn my heart away from the snares of this life. And give me the desire to pursue that which is eternal.

I was in my apartment the other night crying out to God. Oh God keep me, keep me. If I'm blessed, I may have 20 years left.

I've never been in good health so I don't expect to go to 90 years of age. My cry is God keep me. Let what I live and preach.

At the end of my life I want to be able to look back and say to my children and my grandchildren and if God allows my great grandchildren and say follow me. As I follow Christ it is worth it. It is not an empty confusing theology.

I don't want an empty confusing anything at the end of my life. I want to be able to look back to my children in my house and say come this way. Build on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you will never ever be disappointed all the days of your life. I hear the cry in the heart of God when Israel was wandering through the wilderness. And he said I've set before you life and death.

Choose life. It seems to be almost as the expression goes a no brainer. Choose life.

But yet so many people in the church try to choose the middle road. And stuff God into a selfish existence. It doesn't work.

Joshua stood before the people and he said choose this day. Choose who you will serve as for me and my house. We will serve the Lord.

Live or die. We will serve the Lord. God grant you wisdom.

I haven't stood here tonight to condemn anyone. I stood in this pulpit with the heart of God. And if you don't understand the love that is behind the words that you've heard then you've missed everything.

Tonight the Holy Spirit is pleading for some. You're not yielded to God. You're looking still to find fulfillment apart from Jesus Christ.

You're looking to entertainment. You're looking thinking if I can just build that dream home I will be so happy. If I can just get the next promotion.

If I can just find the right relationship. And you are missing the whole point of being a Christian. Things above.

That's where life is. And God by his grace will keep you. Tonight's choice is simply will I be the man who comes after the king? Or will I be the man who comes after the king? Which king will I follow? Will I follow Solomon or Christ? Which king? Jesus simply pursued the will of his father.

Beginning to end. That's all he did. He pursued his father's will.

Placed himself into his father's hands. And our redemption was won. Solomon brought defeat to the whole nation of Israel.

And allowed the enemies of God to invade the borders and steal. Albeit only temporarily but steal the heritage of God. Which king? I want to give an altar call tonight for everyone who has the courage to say, Pastor from this day forward by God's grace I am putting away ungodly television, videos, magazines, relationships in some cases, alcohol, drugs, ambitious pursuits in the areas of employment.

God, I want life. And I want the life that comes through Christ. If that's your heart tonight, would you join me as we all stand together? Just come.

There's only a hundred or so in the annex. You can make your way down here. Please just join me at this altar.

And I'm not going to pray with you tonight. I'm going to ask Pastor David to pray with you tonight. That's why I feel the Holy Spirit would have him come.

But I'd like you to join me at this altar. And say, Pastor, by God's grace I'm going to build this life in the spirit. By the power of the Holy Ghost.

Balcony, you can go to either exit. Please make your way here. Main sanctuary.

Everyone who's backslidden, get out of your seat. Good grief. Why do you want to play with eternity? Why do you want to tempt the Holy God? If you're backslidden, if you have an ounce of the fear of God, get out of your seat.

And make your way to this altar. You have just even an ounce left in your life. Get out of your seat and don't stiffen your heart against God.

He holds out his hand and offers you life. We dare never take that lightly. We dare never play with that.

This isn't a game. This is reality. This is eternity.

There is a day when the gracious hand of God is going to be withdrawn to this generation. There is a day when grace is going to be removed. You can keep coming as the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart.

Hallelujah. I've only preached this message because I care. I believe the Holy Spirit has given me a word for you that came forward tonight.

I want you, please, not to dwell on the issues that brought you down to the altar. It could be any of these things that I've named. I don't want you to focus on any sin in particular or any failure in your life concerning your walk with God or your relationships or anything else.

I found out that when I was a child, eight years old, the Lord told me if I would give my life to Him, He would deal with my sins. He wanted more than my sins. He wanted my life.

And if you're willing to come up here now and say, Lord, I'm not coming up here for just a fix on my sin. I'm coming up now to tell you I want to give you and surrender my whole life to you. And if you've come with that purpose in mind, the Lord will honor that.

Still, that's where I'm at. You heard Pastor Carter say, I want more than that. Lord Jesus, keep me.

Hold me. I've given you my life. Now hold it and keep it.

You give Him your life and He'll keep it. He will hold it. He'll give you the desire.

What you should pray with more than anything else, no one will put words in your mouth tonight, but there should be something crying out in you, Lord Jesus, I want you to draw me closer to you. That's what we're saying, just more of you, Jesus. I want you.

And when you want more of Jesus, He gives you. That's what He gives you. The power of sin is more of Jesus.

You get close to Jesus and you give Him your life. Say, I'm not going to live for myself anymore. I want to live for you, Jesus.

I want you, in any way you want to say it, say it in the simplest form as you can, as I pray, Lord, I came tonight to give you my life. And if I give you my life, that includes my sins, my doubts and my fears. I want to give you my life and I want to serve you with everything that's in me from this day on.

While I pray, you pray that. You make the real cry and prayer of your heart and you watch and see what happens. You watch and see how, if you just allow Him, He comes and He makes you clean.

He makes you clean. Pray it in any way you can, right from your heart, Lord, I give you my life. Lord, let that be the prayer of everyone that came forward tonight.

I give you my life. When I give you my life, I give you my fear. I give you my doubts.

I give you all my failures. I give you all my bad things that are in my life. I give them to you, Jesus, because I want you.

Lord, we have to want more than forgiveness. We have to want more than our sins plucked out of our heart. Lord, we have to be full of you.

Our hearts have to be full of you. There has to be a desire in our hearts. And you said if we draw near to you, you have promised you will draw nigh to us.

Would you pray that right now, Lord? Lord, I'm drawing near to you now, and I believe you that you said you'd draw near to me. Say it right out, Lord. You said you'd draw near to me if I draw nigh to you, and I'm drawing nigh to you to give you my heart.

Come now, Lord. You said you would come. Come on, pray.

Pray it right out, right out of your heart. Not just a simple prayer, not just a one-word prayer. Pray it.

Come on, right out of your gut. Lord, I want you. I want you.

Lord, I want more than just to be forgiven tonight. I want to be clean, but I want you, Jesus. I want a revelation of you.

I want to get closer to you. I want to walk with you. I want to have this intimacy with you, Jesus.

I want more of you. Could you just lift up a hand or two? One hand or both hands? And pray that right now. Lord Jesus, here I am.

I want you, Jesus. Lord, let that be the prayer of everyone in this house and in the annex. Lord, we want you.

It's all about having you in our lives, walking with you, talking with you, ministering to you, and having you minister to us. Bring us close to you, Jesus. Lord, the closer we get to you, the more distance you put between us and our sins.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus. Now, while your hands are up, thank Him for loving you.

Say, I thank you for loving me, Jesus. I thank you that you've cared for me. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Jesus. The greatest act of love God can give you and me is to reprove us with His grace, reprove us with love, so that we can take the Word in appropriated terms. Did you hear what the Word said tonight? You want it all wrapped up so you can take it home and you don't have to remember anything else but this, maybe, of all that you hear tonight? Believe what you heard.

Receive it in your heart. It's His Word. And say, Lord, I don't want to hear it and lose it.

If you pray that prayer, Lord, don't let me lose what I heard tonight. He'll not let you lose it. He'll remind you of it.

That's what the Holy Ghost said He would do. That's the work of the Holy Spirit to bring back all the words that Jesus has delivered to you. Lord, You delivered Your Word tonight.

We pray You'll not let us forget it, but take it to heart and live it out by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith, through simple childlike faith. Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the message.

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