

The Open Hand of God

by Carter Conlon

God's open hand is a symbol of his willingness to satisfy our deepest desires and provide for our needs, and trusting him brings freedom and power.

Duration: 53:52

Scripture: Joshua 24:15, Psalm 71:18, Psalm 145:4, Psalm 145:16, Matthew 6:33, John 1:1, John 20:27

Topics: "Trials"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of observing a small duck swimming against a powerful stormy ocean. Through this observation, the speaker reflects on the design of nature and how it declares the glory of God. The speaker also shares a personal story of finding rest and spiritual renewal near the ocean. Additionally, the speaker expresses their faith in God and their belief in His ability to do even greater things in their life and ministry.

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. I want to share something very simple tonight, and I'm trusting that even in its simplicity it will be profound, because sometimes it's the simplest truth that can unlock mysteries and bring us into a place of faith.

I'd like you to pray with me tonight. Father, I thank you, God, for your presence. Oh, God Almighty, thank you.

Lord, you have so visited us. You've so been with us. You're speaking to us.

We are hearing from heaven, and we are so deeply grateful. You're giving us the ability to even will to do what you ask us to do, and then you give us the power to become what you ask us to be. It's all about you, Jesus.

Everything is found in you. Oh, God, you're speaking to us, and help us now not to stop short of the high calling that you've placed on our lives. I speak of everyone individually, as well as the church.

Help us, God, to hear, and when we hear, to obey, and to obey by faith, believing that what you have spoken into our lives you're well able to do. God, we want to count in this last hour of time for your kingdom's sake and for your name's sake. We don't want to live out the last days just trying to survive.

We want to declare we have survived. There's a life so far beyond anything this world could ever know. God, I thank you from the very depths of my heart that you will enable me to speak this.

You put it on my heart. I know it's from you, and I ask you to speak it simply through me to those that you've gathered to hear your word tonight, and I thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name. Psalm 145, please, of the Old Testament, the open hand of God.

Psalm 145, one verse of scripture. The psalmist speaks this by revelation. He says, God, you open your hand, and you satisfy the desire.

That means the deepest, innermost longings. Actually, the word in the Hebrew for desire means those things that the human heart desires that only God can do. And the psalmist says, Lord, you open your hand, and you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

That means everyone who's in this house tonight. God has already stretched open his hand to you to satisfy the deepest desires that you will ever have. Desires that are so deep you don't even know they're there.

Some desires have been placed behind a wall of impossibility, in a sense that there are things that we long for that only God could do. But as we heard this afternoon at three o'clock, we look in the mirror, and we see our own frailties and failings, and we relegate them as it is to the realm of the impossible. It's a desire, but it could never happen.

But the Bible brings to us a truth from the one whose mouth created the universe. Remember, in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, he says, but by faith we understand that the worlds were not framed by things that are. They were framed by the word of God.

Out of nothing, God created something. And God says, I open my hand, not just to the universe, but I open my hand to my creation. Obviously, Jesus Christ is God's open hand to our generation.

God's hand of love, God's hand of mercy and deliverance and forgiveness, power, everything we'll ever need is found in Jesus Christ. And Christ is God's open hand, saying, whosoever will, let him come to me. You'll find rest for your soul.

You'll find the abundant life that you've longed for. You'll find that in the power of God, you'll be taken, carried as it is by God, as I've preached here so many times because it's one of the greatest revelations that God has ever birthed in my own heart, that I will carry you from image to image. That means from one place to a new place, from what you were to what you will be, from weakness to strength, from confusion to knowledge, from inability to ability, from inusability to great usability in the kingdom of God.

I'll carry you from image to image and glory to glory by the spirit of God, by the open hand of God. Paul, the apostle, said in Romans chapter one, he makes a declaration. He says that everything around us plainly declares the goodness of God.

It's everywhere in creation for those who care to observe it. Actually, Paul takes it another step and he makes an inference that that's why every man will stand without excuse one day before the throne of God, because the very heavens declare the glory of God. Nature itself, everything around us shows us the life, the life of God is in it.

I'm talking apart from that part which is tainted by the sin of fallen humanity around it, but you can see the hand of God in everything. There's a plain declaration. It's as if a pen from heaven wrote throughout nature and said, this is what God is like.

This is what God does. This is how God cares for those things which are his. And Paul said one day everyone will stand before God because his character is plainly declared throughout all of his creation.

And that's how everyone will stand one day before God without excuse. There's such a declaration in the universe, in nature itself, that it doesn't matter if you live in China or India, if you're Hindu or Muslim, there's such a declaration of God that the honest heart that finally says, God, who are you? Show me. Christ will come.

If he has to come himself, he will come and show himself. Any honest heart seeking him will find him. Any honest heart in any place, he will open his hand and satisfy the deepest desire.

Paul says the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made. About several months ago in the wintertime, my wife and I went away for a few days to a place that we go to in Canada. We were both very tired and very thankful for the opportunity to take a week away.

And the home that we go to is beside the ocean. Magnificent. I love water.

I have an absolute sense of feeling of rest that comes into my soul when I'm near water. And this particular, I think it was a February day. It was very windy and it was snowing a little bit and the ocean is right outside the window.

And I came downstairs to have my devotions in the morning. And it's just one of those times when you're so tired that you're reading, but it doesn't seem like you're reading anything. The words on the page are not really speaking because you're just mentally weary.

And I sat there with my Bible on my lap and I looked out the window and it was an incredibly windy day. And there's quite large waves rolling out on the ocean. The snow is beating down.

The sea is this foreboding type of a gray. The tide is moving out and the tide is so powerful in that part of the world that it's actually very dangerous for people who are not familiar with it to even go out in a boat and to definitely never go swimming. And the tide is pulling out.

Some icebergs had come in off the ocean. I don't know when they were there when I arrived there, but the tide is so powerful that it's moving these masses of ice out to the ocean again. If there were a ship that were without power, the tide would move it very rapidly back out into the ocean again.

And there's this incredible mass of power that is taking everything in its path. I saw the tide. I see icebergs being moved.

I see this in masses of water. It's incredible the amounts of water from high tide to low tide. There's probably something like a four to five foot difference in the level of the water in some places.

Incredible power. And I'm looking out the window at this and I felt in my spirit that God said, I want to show you something. This is a devotional time, but even nature declares the glory of God.

And I looked out and the window I was looking through was crisscrossed with these white squares that are in between the panes of glass. And I'm looking out the window as I'm looking out onto the ocean right in the middle of all of this incredible power that is drawing everything in its wake under the ocean is a little wee brown duck. And the Holy Spirit said to me, behold the duck, look at the duck.

And I began to look out the window and this little duck is moving in the other direction. He's going up and over the waves. And I watched him because I don't know how far it was.

I'm looking through this square and from my vantage point, the square is probably 50 yards or so of distance. And this little duck, this ferocious storm with all of these waves and all of the wind and the power of the tide and icebergs going by and all of that was against it. This little duck is going in the opposite direction to all this power and he is floating on top of the waves.

He weighs about two and a half pounds. He's got little webbed feet and he's moving in the opposite direction. And I watched him through that square until he had passed about that 50 yard distance.

And the Lord said to me, clearly, do you know what you've just seen? And I'm looking at this as now what you've seen is something that I have designed. You know why the duck can do that? He can do it because I designed him to do it. And whatsoever I designed to do something will accomplish that purpose for which I have designed it for.

And God said to me, you can do anything I called you to do. You can be anything I've called you to be. You can go anywhere I've called you to go.

It's amazing how limited we become because of our intelligence. Imagine if the duck was as intelligent as we are and took a look at the massive ocean, the freezing water that would probably kill us in three minutes flat if we fell into it. The incredible power of the wind and tide.

And the duck looked at himself and said, I'm only two and a half pounds. I only have two little feet. And how what do I have in comparison to this incredible force that comes against me? You see, when Jesus rose from the dead, beloved, he he broke the power of sin and death and hell and weakness.

He broke the power. The whole world can go the other way, but you don't have to go that way. God designed you for something.

When you came to Christ, a gifting was given you for the body. Everyone here who's a genuine Christian, you have a gift. God put something in you.

And it doesn't matter who's going the other way. It doesn't matter what force because of your lack of education, your pastor, what other people have spoken into your life. It doesn't matter.

God designed you to do something. And by the grace and power of God, you will do it. Now, Christ himself said to look at nature to see the hand of God.

Matthew 6:26, he said, Behold, the fowls of the air, they don't sow. They don't reap and neither gather into barns. And yet your heavenly father feeds them.

Are you not much better than they? Jesus himself said, Just look at nature. Look at the birds around you. God cares for them.

God feeds them. I was walking to church this week and I saw a lady out on 51st crumbling bread and throwing it all over the sidewalk for the pigeons. And I thought, you know, she feels like she has motivated herself to do a good deed.

But I venture to differ with that. I believe there's something higher than her that's motivated her to go out in that street and feed the birds, because Jesus himself said, You're my father in heaven, feeds them, looks after them, cares for them. It's an amazing thing when you begin to see it.

And are you not much better than they? Yes, we have human hands that open and satisfy. But God says my hand is much larger than any other hand you'll ever find. And my hand opens to you to satisfy every desire that's in your heart.

Psalms 145 again, verse one. David says it this way. He says, I will extol thee, my God, O King, and I will bless thy name forever and ever.

Every day will I bless thee and I will praise thy name forever and ever. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. And his greatness is unsearchable.

And one generation shall praise thy works to another and shall declare thy mighty acts one generation to another. This is this has been the pattern of God for his church. The pattern of God is to so work in my life that as my generation passes, I will declare it to another.

And another generation by faith will begin to understand who God is and lay hold of his power, and he will do mighty works in them and through them, and then they will declare his power to another generation that shall come. One generation, David says, shall declare your works to another and declare your mighty acts. You remember the psalm of the aged man in the Psalms? He said, Oh, God, don't let me pass through into eternity until I have shown your power to a generation that is to come.

I believe that's the cry of every righteous man and woman of God, especially in their senior years. Oh, God, don't let me pass through until your power has been declared to my life, until I have declared to this generation what you have done in me and what you have done through me. The mighty acts of God.

If I had the time tonight, I could tell you a hundred things, perhaps a thousand. It might be stretching it a bit, but I can tell you a hundred things for sure that God has done in my life. Mighty acts of God, things that could not come but from the hand of God.

And the Bible says, I will declare it to the next generation. I'm 50 years old soon, and I guess my time has started to start declaring it to the next generation. But I will declare it.

I want to declare it. I want to stand on the highest mountain. I want to declare it in every country that God would send me.

I want to declare it in every place, to every people, of every persuasion, of every status or state in life, every amount of ability or disability. I want to share it with everyone who lives, that there is no limitation

with God. He can take you wherever you are and make you what you are not and take you where you can't go and give you what you could never possess.

I'll share with you quickly ten things that God has done for me. First and foremost, he took me out of a dung heap, out of the miry clay, as the scripture says, and gave me a new song. He broke the chains of sin in my life and gave me freedom.

Hallelujah. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

If you are a new Christian or somebody that's contemplating coming to Christ, you don't have to live under the power of sin anymore. Sin has no dominion over you. That means it has no right to rule your life anymore.

Old habits have to pass. They have to die. Old bondages will go away.

Old attitudes will change by the Spirit of God. The devil has no power over you anymore. Your flesh has no power.

Oh yes, it will war against you, but it is a defeated foe. Christ rose from the grave. The power that rose Christ from the grave now resides within your life.

Hallelujah. The Bible says, the same Spirit that quickened Christ and raised him from the dead will also quicken our mortal bodies. Death has no more dominion over you.

You don't have to be in bondage to the beggarly ways of human flesh in this world. You don't have to live there anymore. God has put within you the power to go another way.

God has put within you the power to be another person. Hallelujah. He directed my steps even when I was confused.

There were days in the early years when I came to Christ when I didn't understand his working. There was even a time when I thought God himself had betrayed my trust. I was confused, but in my heart I loved him.

In my heart I wanted him. And he directed my steps. He is so faithful to those that are his.

He doesn't cast us down. The devil always tries to convince you that somehow you've really done wrong this time and God's going to turn away from you, but the devil is an absolute liar. He is a liar.

The Bible says he's the father of lies. And when he speaks a lie, he just speaks of what he is. He doesn't know how to speak the truth.

But even in confusion, God has been good to me. God has kept me. God has ordered my steps.

He declared me righteous through Christ even when theologically I didn't understand the full implications of that like I do today. But he declared me righteous and ordered my steps. And I thank God for it with all of my heart.

It gives me the courage to stand here and tell you God will be gracious to you. If you have a heart and you want him, irrespective of where you live or what you're going through, God will be gracious to you because he's been gracious to me. He provided all my needs even while he was leading my heart to trust him.

I didn't trust him overnight. It's not easy. You grow up with a certain mindset.

But the Lord began to teach me how to trust him in little things. And even while my trust was of yet imperfect in that sense, back in those days, he still continued to provide for my needs as he was leading my heart to trust him. I can give you circumstance after circumstance of how faithful God has been to me.

He opened his hand and satisfied my need. Oh, yes, he never let me go very far. Ironically, he never let me put money in the bank when I was a young Christian.

I tried so hard. Every time I got money in the bank, my car broke down and the repair on my car would be virtually every penny I had in the bank. And then I would save again and finally feel so content because now I had some money in the bank and my car would break down again.

And I don't know how many times this happened until it finally dawned on me. God, if I just stop putting money in the bank, my car would stop breaking down. And that's exactly what began to happen.

He taught me how to tithe to give one-tenth of my income to the work of God. I remember the first time I heard it, I almost had a heart attack in church. The very first thing that happens is out comes the calculator and the paycheck, one-tenth.

Where am I going to find that kind of money to give to the work of God? And I was a deacon at this time when this came to me. Oh, folks, that shows you how backslidden the church is. But he taught me how to give and taught me how to trust him and taught me to be open-handed as he is to me.

And it is said, and it's true, you can't out-give God. You can't. If it's the Holy Spirit that's prompting you, if you just simply obey him, you can't out-give him.

He restored my marriage. He made my wife a crown to my life and a fruitful vine on the sides of my house. I thank God for that with all of my heart.

I shared with you years ago that our marriage was in deep difficulty when I came to Christ, when both of us really came at the same time. But God restored. Only God can give back what is gone.

I don't think restored is a proper word. Restored is not the right word because that means bringing it back to what it was. No, he didn't take it to where it was.

He brought it far beyond what it ever could have been. He restored. And the Bible says that a virtuous wife is a crown to her husband.

And I have a wife today who's a crown to my life. And I remember reading in the scriptures years ago that that spoke about a wife whose virtuous woman is a fruitful vine on the sides of her husband's home. And I thank God for that with all my heart, for what he has done in our marriage and what he has done for my wife.

He delivered my children from numerous perilous situations, from a fire one time that burned our house to the ground. And a lady who had been staying with us just got this incredible burden to go home from this single adults meeting she was attending at 10 minutes before the entire house exploded into flames, saving the life of my daughter and her own two children that were there at that time. My two sons were a lady called and asked if they could stay overnight.

And normally this never happened. And they did. And God spared their lives.

My both sons have been in car wrecks that should have killed them. One son, a car overruled after a hockey game and caught fire. And only by the grace of God did he get out and was able to pull his friend out of the car.

The people who saw the car roll said they don't even know how anybody got out of that alive. It was 30 seconds from the time it landed to the time it literally exploded. And there was nothing left of the car.

But by God's grace, he walked away. I think of my other son coming to visit just a year and a half ago and losing control near Montreal and hitting at quite a quite a speed, a pole in the middle of the highway, literally wrapping the car around it and walking away from that. I could tell you story after story.

The devil has tried very hard to kill my children over the years, but he's not even been able to touch them or scratch them. I thank God for it with all my heart. I think of my my daughter, Katie.

There is an angel in heaven that's going to get an all expense paid vacation to somewhere in the universe when she finally makes it home to heaven. This stuff that she has been saved from drowning. She almost drowned one time when she was a child.

And by the grace of God, a lady who was sitting there happened to notice and be able to pull her out from under the water. She was attacked by a donkey when she was a child and which could have been fatal. But by God's grace, again, there was a little boy that came and attacked the donkey, started kicking it and punching it.

And literally she was saved from death. She's had two near fatal asthma attacks and was in the house when our house was broken into, hiding in the closet with our absolutely terrified dog that was supposed to be our protector. I can go on and on about how faithful God has been to me.

God has been faithful to me. God has been faithful to my sons and my daughter, and he is sovereignly leading them to himself now, sovereignly showing himself, sovereignly touching their hearts and lives. And I thank God for it with all of my heart.

He has kept my own life in the midst of illness. I have on two occasions been extremely ill to the point of at times despairing of health totally. But God has kept me.

And out of these times of illness has produced something of his own nature and his own character. He opened his hand and satisfied my desire, even when I didn't understand that he was doing what he did for allowing it for my own good. He saved my father after 22 years of believing God saved him, led me to his hospital room in another country in the last conscious hour of his life, brought me into that room to lead him to a saving decision for Jesus Christ that he had resisted all of his life, that I had known him as a Christian.

To watch his knee bend was like watching an oak fall in the midst of a forest. One of the most incredible experiences of my entire life is to lead that man to Jesus Christ and to know it was a genuine conversion, a genuine bending of the heart and knees. God has filled my heart with faith to believe him for much more.

The more we let him do, the more it fills our heart to believe him for more. It's like the writer of Hebrews said, What more can I say? Time would fail me to talk of I haven't even talked about Nigeria. I haven't

talked about the Philippines.

I haven't even talked about being called out of fear and delivered and brought into the ministry. I haven't talked about any of these things. But my heart is filled to believe him for more.

My heart is filled to believe him for countries. My heart is filled to believe him for the worst of the worst situations. My heart is filled to make a declaration to wherever and whoever that nothing is impossible with God.

God can do anything. And lastly, he has spoken to my heart like he did to David about generations to come, even after I am gone. God has clearly spoken to my heart about my house, about my home, about children that I may never or grandchildren or great grandchildren I may never know.

But he has spoken to my heart that should he tarry, there is going to be a lineage of godliness, a lineage of Christ likeness, a lineage of ministry come into my house and into my family. God has spoken it into my heart. I have not invented it out of something.

I heard it from him. I heard his voice and I believe it with all my heart. David says Psalm 145, verse 5, I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty and thy wondrous works and men shall speak of the mighty of thy terrible acts and I will declare thy greatness.

They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works.

All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endure throughout all generations.

David says, I will speak of what God has done for me. I will make a declaration. I will talk about it to generations to come and I will tell them that his power endures throughout all generations.

In other words, there is no diminishing of God's power. There's no diminishing of God's power. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

There is no diminishing of his power. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Don't live your life talking about yesterday. Get a hold of God for today. Get a hold of God for tomorrow.

Let God begin to do mighty works in your life and through your life. David says in verse 14, the Lord upholds all that fall and raises those that be bowed down. Now he'd know this through personal experience.

He had fallen sometimes perhaps more dramatically. Issues that we know about in his life and other times, maybe areas where he himself was the only one besides God that had the knowledge. But in spite of the failure, he had come to a place of understanding that God upholds those that fall and raises those that be bowed down.

This is a principle with God. Some here tonight, you may feel like you're never going to get up again. You're in the midst of the worst storm and trouble of your entire life.

You see, if you didn't have a storm, you would never know that God can raise you. If you didn't have a trial, you wouldn't have a testimony. You'd have a theology, but you'd have no testimony.

You'd have no declaration. You'd open your Bible to your children and grandchildren. All you could do is just read it, but it wouldn't mean nothing to you.

You'd have no testimony. You're going to have trials. You're going to go through the fire.

You're going to have, if you live and breathe, if you're human, you're going to have trial. Trouble is going to come your way. If you're not in it now, just hang on.

It's not far away. Trouble is coming your way. But in the midst of it is a faithful God who opens his hand, and every prison door has to open.

Every need will be met. Every desire, every issue of the heart and life will be met by him. He upholds those that fall and raises those that are bowed down.

Verse 15, he says, the eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. David says, God never fails to provide that which is needed. Never fails, never fails.

I'm, I'm, I don't know, maybe 25 or so years a Christian now, and I've got a ways to go, but I can tell you so far, he never fails. He has never failed me. He will never fail me.

How could he fail me? He's not a man. He cannot lie. Even when I don't understand him, he still hasn't failed me.

God will not fail me. He never fails. He provides that which is needed, not necessarily that which we want, but that which is needed he gives us.

Thanks be to God. I remember when I started pastoring, we had bought a church for a dollar. We were knowing such incredible success, and we had a Christian school.

Everything is going my way. Everything, everything, everything. I felt, I felt just ready to take the country for God.

And this seasoned man of God came for the dedication service of the church, and he had a personal word for me. And he says, there's a day coming when you're going to think that you can't go on. Now, that was so foreign to where I was living at the time.

You almost feel like rebuking the devil when you hear somebody. He said, but I will tell you that when it comes, God will give you the strength that you need for every day, and only for a day. That was his word to me.

He will only give you the strength for a day, and at the end of that day, you lift up your voice again, and God will say, I'll give you strength for tomorrow. And he said, it will become one day at a time, and out of this you will mature. Out of this, you will learn something of God that you will never learn any other way.

Well, beloved, the day came. And then the next day, and the next for six months, that day came. And I remember standing, I've shared this with this church before, years ago, but I remember standing one Sunday in church.

I was so weak. I was so exhausted. Most of it is just from my own foolishness, just never knowing when to stop, and driving this body at full speed all the time, and carrying the weight of everything, worrying about everything, carrying it all on my shoulders until finally one day I broke down.

And I'm standing in the front of the church, and I said, God, I can't go on. I can't do this. I can't preach another sermon.

And I'm not the type of person who does this. I don't look for voices, but I tell you, surely as I stand here, somebody spoke to me. A voice whispered right in my ear, an audible voice.

It said, I've come to help you. I looked, it so startled me that I looked, and nobody was there. Nobody was beside me.

But I felt an infusion of God's strength come into my life. Got up into the pulpit, and I think preached one of the finest messages that God had given me in a long time. He never fails.

He provides that which is needed. Even if he has to send an angel to do it, he will do it. He will always provide that which is needed.

And I can stand and make a declaration. I had a friend say one time, it's been mountaintop all the way for me since I came to Christ. I've been on top of the mountain, and the mountain's been on top of me.

But it's been mountaintop all the way. Verse 19, verse 18, the Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. And the word truth in the Hebrew means to those who have made a stable commitment to him.

You see, we heard about that this morning. The Lord is close to those who have made a stable commitment. That means the people who have said, I'm going with you, and I'm going in truth.

And the promise is, he's always near. He's always near, because I'm not looking for God to justify my thinking. I'm looking for the mind of God.

I'm calling out to him, and he's got access to my heart. He can speak to me. I might be going through the worst struggle of my life, and I'm focused on the struggle, and he wants to talk about my attitude towards a person.

But you see, if I'm calling to him in truth, that means I want the truth. I want to know the truth. I want to walk in the truth.

And he will always be with me. He will fulfill the desire, verse 19, of them that fear him. And he will also hear their cry and save them.

He has fulfilled my desire, David said. The things that I requested, which only could be done by God, he has fulfilled them. And he's done it all, verse 16, by opening his hand to satisfy my desire.

I'd like, if I had time tonight, but I don't, to take you through the Psalms and give you a tour of God's ability to satisfy. Let me just share it with you very, very briefly. Psalm 22, 24 to 26 tells us that the meek will be satisfied by knowing that they are possessed both in and with the heart of God.

God says, I will satisfy you. You will have the knowledge that you are in my heart, and you will have my heart manifested through you and through your life, and that will satisfy you. Psalm 17, 15, the psalmist says, I'll be satisfied when I awake with his likeness.

I'll be satisfied by beholding God as he truly is, not having to make my own God to fit my own lifestyle, but seeing him as he is, fully satisfied. It's an incredible thing to see Christ in truth and be fully satisfied. It cannot come but through a surrendered life.

It cannot come but to the man or woman that says, God, take me and in truth use me for your glory. It cannot come. You cannot see Christ until your heart is in line with truth.

But when your heart's in line with truth, I tell you that even the bitter things become sweet. Even the things we don't understand, we accept by faith and we say, God, I've entrusted something into your hand and I believe that you're able to keep it until the day that you come and bring me home to you. Everything I've given to you, God, you're going to keep it in your hand because that's who you are.

You satisfy the desire of every living thing. Psalm 63, verses 1, verse 5 tells us that in a thirsty land, the deepest inner longings of our soul will be satisfied in this place. Everyone around could be dying of spiritual thirst, but the man or woman who looks to God in truth, God says, even in a thirsty place, I will satisfy your soul as with marijuana fatness.

I will fill you in a dry and a thirsty place. Psalm 65, verse 4 tells us that you will be satisfied just simply because we're being drawn to God Almighty himself. That's why you're in the house tonight.

Do you think you just randomly decided to come to Times Square Church? You no more randomly decided to be here than the lady who fed the birds the other day on 51st. You are here because God drew you. He drew you to satisfy you, to satisfy you with his life, to satisfy you with his forgiveness, to satisfy you with his power, to give you a testimony in your generation and to the next generation.

That's why you're here. That's why you've experienced his presence tonight and God's opening his word to you. Psalm 91, verses 14 to 16 tells us that every day will be full and my life will fulfill its complete and intended course.

I'll be satisfied. God will draw me. God will fulfill his life that he has for me through me.

He will do it and I will be satisfied. Hallelujah. To be in the hospital on Tuesday, Pastor, with Sister Faye and to see her clapping her hands with three days to live.

Incredible. Clapping her hands, going home to be with Jesus, the cheapest desire of her heart. Satisfied, indwelt by Christ and satisfied.

Hallelujah. Let my end be like hers. Let the end of my life be like that.

That's what I desire it to be. I used to want to die quickly, but I'm not so sure anymore. It used to be a prayer of mine until very recently.

Lord, I just want to have a heart attack and die. I just want to get it over with real fast. I don't want to go through this.

But that may not be the will of God. Be nice to die preaching here. It really would be nice.

I just hope he doesn't satisfy that desire tonight. Can we hold off on that one just for a little while? Psalm 107.9 says he satisfies the hungry soul with his goodness. And he does it all with an open hand.

It's amazing how long it takes us to see this. Isn't it a strange thing? We can learn the Bible inside out and the basics left the children of Israel at the shore. The basics left God's people at a time when Joshua had to say, how long will you halt between two opinions? If God is God, then serve him.

It's funny, we can learn Hebrew and Greek and meanings of things, but ultimately it boils down to the question of, who do you believe that I am? I've opened my hand to you and what will you do with it? Where will this take you? There is no limit, but the limit that unbelief puts on the work of God. This is a powerful passage of scripture. Christ appeared to them after his resurrection.

I'm just going to read it to you. It's John chapter 20. And then he said to Thomas, now Thomas was the one who said, I just can't bring myself to believe it.

And he said to Thomas, reach here your finger and behold my hands. It's incredible when you see that God's open hand is Jesus Christ. Completely given, totally poured out, raised from the dead as there cannot be a deeper proof.

He said, reach and look at my hands and reach here your hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing. In other words, behold the hand of God, the hand of God is Jesus Christ. He said, Thomas, look, look, here's the hand of God poured out for you, given for you, triumphing over all the powers of darkness.

Thomas, you see, I was dead, but I live. Don't be faithless anymore. If there's a cry, I think that comes from the spirit of God to any church age, to any Christian, is don't be faithless.

Thomas had walked with Christ, he'd seen the miracles, but it's not enough. It's not enough to say, I go to Times Square Church, it's a wonderful thing, you do a tender, but it's not enough. Not enough that you read your Bible as wonderful as that is or go to prayer meetings as great as that might be.

You might even go to all night prayer. But what does it avail if God opens his hand and it doesn't do anything in your life? He said to Thomas, don't be faithless, but believe. First of all, believe that God can forgive you and he will forgive you.

That's what it's all about. He will forgive you if you're a sinner tonight, if you're living in a moral lifestyle captivated by the powers of darkness, you've done violent, horrible things in your past. Or whatever your situation might be, don't be faithless.

Believe that God will forgive you because he said whosoever will can come. That means everybody and anybody. The ground is totally level at the cross.

Anybody. Everybody can come. He's opened his hand at the cross.

That's what the crucifixion was all about. It's the open hand of God to fall in humanity. It's God's invitation to you in your sin, telling you that you can have forgiveness in the newness of life.

Don't be faithless, but believe that he can break the power of sin. You don't have to live under the dominion of sin. You don't have to go home and get back into that same old sinful rut again.

You don't have to live like that. He broke the power of sin. Don't be faithless.

Believe it. The moment you agree with God, God says, I'll come to you. I'll open my hand to you and I'll satisfy your desire.

If you truly want to be free, I'll set you free. It's amazing. I'll set you free.

I never took any how-to courses. I believed him. I read the book and I said, this is true.

And I believed him and walked out. Oh, prisons had me. You better be sure of it.

When I came to Christ, prisons of thinking and behavior and everything else, same as every other sinner. But I believed him and walked out. I saw the door was open.

I understood something. It just, faith touched my heart and I just walked out. I don't have any other test.

I don't know how else to say it. I just walked out. I believed him and he set me free.

It's as complicated as that. He opened his hand and released me from the power of all my enemies. Believe that he can bring you through your weakness and your struggle and your failure.

Believe it. Don't be faithless. Believe it.

Even nature declares it. He can bring you through. You'd be amazed if there was a genuine heart responding tonight.

In an audience this large, there have to be powerful callings of God on people's lives. Powerful callings of God to the mission field, to the drug addicted and homeless and poor. If you will believe, you have to hear him first, obviously, but then believe him.

Don't be faithless. You've got to believe that he can use your life. He will use your life.

I don't see anywhere in the Bible where it says, well, there were a few that I saved and give my spirit so they could do exploits and the rest I just put on the shelf to attend church and sing songs. That's not in the Bible. Your life has a purpose.

It's that you allow and I allow God to do wondrous works in us that can only be done by the Spirit of God as a declaration of who he is to the next generation, to this and the next, especially in the church. That's why when the church lost a hold of the simplicity of this truth and all the teenagers just yawn and leave the church, they don't want to be there. And lastly, believe that he can satisfy the deepest longings of your soul, the deepest desires of your heart.

I can honestly say tonight that if I die tomorrow, I have no regrets and I have no unfulfilled ambitions either, other than to glorify him as long as I live. He has satisfied it and Christ is enough. He satisfied the deepest longings of my soul.

I hope tonight that you are hearing his heart and that you're willing to believe, whoever you are, that he can forgive you, break the power of sin, bring you through your struggle, use your life, satisfy the deepest desire of your heart. It's all in Jesus. Father, I thank you.

Lord, I know I've delivered your heart. I have felt your pleasure tonight for this congregation. I sense an inward delight in your heart, God, because you know what so many could become here.

You see so many fulfilled in you, yet in your mercy you leave the choice to follow to us. God, give us the grace to make the right choice. Father, I thank you, God, from the depths of my heart for what you're going to do tonight, tomorrow, in the weeks to come.

Lord, the callings, the giftings that are going to be realized for the glory of God. Father, I thank you in Jesus' mighty name. I'd like us to sing that song, Draw Me Nearer.

And as we do, if the Holy Spirit is drawing you, if you want to be a Christian, to live for God, if you want to step away from sin, trust God in your struggle, if you want to believe that he can use your life, I'm going to ask you to slip out, come join me at this altar. How many tonight could say, Pastor, I am a sinner, and I realize that I deserve to go to hell because of the things that I've done. I've violated the law of God.

But I see in Jesus Christ tonight, God's open hand for me. I see the provision made, the penalty paid for my sin, and the way made for me that I can be forgiven. And tonight I want to open my heart and I want to receive Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as my Savior and my Lord.

I want to give my life to him. And I want to believe that because he died for me, that I will be saved from the penalty of sin and brought into a new life, here and for eternity, that he promises to those who trust in him. If that's you tonight, please raise your hand high up in the balcony, main sanctuary, just raise it up.

Go ahead. Do it unashamedly. Way up.

God bless you all over the balcony. Raise your hand up. Keep it up.

Those that want to come to Christ, receive him as Savior tonight. Howl in the wind. Is there somebody else? Just raise your hand up.

Don't be ashamed. Raise it up. This is the Son of God died for you to give you life.

He'll use your life. He'll forgive you and change you, satisfy the desire that's been in your heart for so long. That's why you're here tonight.

You have desires that you can't find. They can't be met anywhere in the world. But tonight he'll forgive you.

Thanks be to God. Now let's all pray for those that are coming into the kingdom of God tonight. Pray with me now.

Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. Jesus, thank you that you died for me. You paid the price for all the wrong things that I have done.

I have violated the laws of God and I deserve to be cast away for all of eternity. But tonight, Jesus, I thank you that you loved me so much that you came to this earth, paid the price for my sin, that I could be forgiven. I don't want to live in sin anymore.

I trust you to teach me how to live and to give me the power to be another person. I thank you tonight for forgiving my sin. I believe with all my heart that you died as living proof that my trust in you is not in vain.

I believe that at this very moment, the shed blood of Jesus Christ, I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah! Save! Save! Save! Save! Save! Save! Hallelujah! Save! Thank you, Jesus! Save! Save! Save! You know what that means. Save! Save! Save! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Save! Thank God! Save! We have a new believers class for those who are saved. If you can come back on Friday nights we'll help to get you started in your walk with God.

If you can't, find a Bible teaching church. Bible believing, Bible teaching, and get to that church. Get yourself a Bible and start by reading the Gospel of John in the New Testament.

The Lord will help you in your walk. Now for the rest of you, do you believe that God can use you? Do you believe it? Do you really, really believe it? In here, deep down. Lord Jesus, I believe.

I believe. That you will use my life. That you will change me.

You will be strength in my struggle. Success in my failure. I believe that you will satisfy the deepest longings of my soul.

I believe that you will use my life and give me a testimony of your faithfulness in my generation. I believe and for the next generation, soon to come. Jesus, thank you.

You've taken me at your word and at my word. I come to you in truth and I believe. It's as simple as that.

Amen! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! This is the conclusion of the message.

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