

The Party Was Over but Nobody Knew It

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon warns of the consequences of ignoring God's authority, urging repentance and a return to righteousness in a time of moral decline.

Duration: 19:12

Scripture: Psalm 126:5, John 21:6

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story from Daniel chapter five, titled 'The Party Was Over and Nobody Knew It.' The sermon emphasizes three immutable laws of the harvest: you reap what you sow, you reap it later than you sow it, and you reap more than you sowed. The preacher highlights the consequences of crossing certain lines in society and emphasizes the importance of right priorities and clean hearts. The sermon concludes with a plea for mercy to triumph over judgment and a desire for a harvest of souls to find salvation in Jesus Christ.

Transcript

I want to share with you something the Lord put on my heart today, and I want to give this message a title. It's from Daniel chapter 5, and the title would be, The Party Was Over and Nobody Knew It. So Father, I thank you, Lord, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit here tonight, that you have guided us as we have prayed.

You have spoken to us about what we are becoming as a nation, as a people, as a city. You have talked to us about right priorities and clean hearts. You have given us the promise that our lives can make a difference, and so we stand on that promise tonight.

We stand on that understanding that as we choose to make right choices in the midst of a nation that's making wrong ones, that you can use our lives, O God, to make a difference, and to turn back this spirit of lawlessness and death, and to see a season of mercy. You tell us in your word that mercy triumphs over judgment, so Lord, we stand on that understanding tonight, and we ask, Lord, that somehow that you would use each of us, Lord, to bring in a moment, a moment of mercy. We recognize that this whole world is going to go into rebellion, but before it does, Lord, and before you judge it, let mercy triumph over it, O God.

Let mercy, Lord, bring a multitude to numerous to count into your kingdom. As you told your disciples to throw the net on the right side of the boat after fishing all night and catching nothing, and they brought in 153 large fish, as we choose to do right on the right side of the boat, let us have a harvest, O God, for your name's sake, for your glory, Lord. We're not looking for a reputation.

We're not looking to be the biggest game in town. We're looking, Lord, for a harvest. We're looking for men, women, and children to find you as Lord and Savior, and that heaven and not hell be their eternal home.

This is why we gather. This is why we're praying. This is what we're hoping for, and we thank you for it in Jesus' name.

Now, this chapter five in Daniel is about the last leader of an incredible empire called Babylon. They were really given the ability to conquer the whole known world of their time, and all kingdoms that will not regard the Lordship of Christ and of Almighty God eventually come to an end. Read your history books.

It's all there. No matter how strong they think they are, no matter how much they've conquered, even Rome bent its knee eventually and self-destructed. This particular king, the last king of the Babylonian empire, says he made a great feast for a thousand of his lords.

He got very, very enamored with himself, I guess, and with all the conquest and all the territory that they held, perhaps around the known world at that time, and drank wine in the presence of the thousands. In other words, they called for a party, and they began to party. While he tasted the wine, he gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple, which had been in Jerusalem.

The king and his lords and his wives and his concubines might drink wine from them. They brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God, which had been in Jerusalem. The king and his lords and his wives and his concubines drank wine from them.

In other words, it was bad enough that they were partying, but now they began to party with the holy things of God. They began to cross lines that God says, you don't cross. You don't turn a relationship with God, or you don't begin to mock God and get away with it.

The New Testament tells us, don't be deceived. Whatever you sow, you're going to reap it. Now, there are three immutable laws of the harvest.

Keep this in mind, no matter what your life practice might be tonight, you sow what you reap, or I mean, you reap what you sow. You reap it later than you sow it, and you reap more than you sowed. They brought the vessels of the temple in Jerusalem, and they began to drink, and they began to party.

They began to celebrate the conquering of all the nations up to and including that which God had set apart for himself. I'm telling you, there are lines you don't cross in any society. When you begin to boast against God, when you begin to boast against the people of God, there's always going to be a price to pay.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. In other words, they were praising everything but the living God. They were praising prosperity.

They were praising military might. They were praising their ability as it had been to go forward and conquer and seemingly unstoppable in their journey. In the same hour, in that same moment where they began to do these things, a man's hand appeared.

In other words, they saw a physical hand appear. There was no body attached to it. It was just a hand, and it wrote something on the wall.

The king saw the part of the hand that wrote, and his countenance changed. His thoughts troubled him. The joints of his hips were loosed, and his knees began to knock together.

He realized, I think, that something had manifested he'd never seen before, and it had written something on the wall of his palace. So he called together all the smartest people he could in his kingdom and said, will somebody tell me what that writing on the wall says? Nobody could tell him what it said. But his wife said, there's a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.

In his days, your father, which would be Nebuchadnezzar, he had wisdom and understanding like the wisdom of the gods. Your father, in other words, not necessarily his father, but one of the kings who came before you, made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, chaldeans, and soothsayers, et cetera, et cetera. In him was an excellent spirit.

And so he sent for this man called Daniel, a man of God, somebody who would still hear from God, somebody who could still speak for God. And he gave him a promise, and he said, if you can tell me what this means, he said, I'll put a chain of gold, I'll give you wonderful clothing, I'll put a chain of gold around your neck, and I'll make you third ruler in the kingdom. Then Daniel answered and said, let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to somebody else.

There is a ministry that has power that's not in it for itself. It's not in it for wealth. It's not in it for reputation.

It's not in it for the accolades of men. There is a ministry that stands and speaks for God and for God alone. Oh, King, he said, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, a kingdom and majesty and glory and honor.

In other words, Belshazzar, it was God that gave you the power to conquer, not yourself. It was God, even to use you as an instrument to judge God's own people. You didn't do it by your own strength.

You didn't do it by your own power. God gave you the ability to do what you did. Because of that majesty that he gave him, all peoples and nations and languages trembled and feared before him.

Whomever he wished, he executed. Whomever he wished, he kept alive. Whomever he wished, he set up, and whomever he wished, he put down.

I can't help but think about the United States of America, particularly New York City, the harbor of refuge that is represented by the Statue of Liberty, the numbers of people that came from all over the world, and the power that was given this nation to raise up one place and to tear down another, the influence worldwide that was given to a people that came really from all different nations. It's amazing. When you stop and think about it, a mixed multitude that came together and had a consciousness of the presence of God were given the ability to do things that other people in other places for thousands of years have never accomplished.

In just a few years, this country, in one sense, represented, I think, by New York Harbor, became in measure the envy of the world. And that's the truth, and you know that. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him, and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys.

They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men and appoints over it whom he chooses. And I can't help but think of the Civil War in this nation, when we set our judgment above the Word of God one time before. Oh yes, it was written in our Constitution that all men were created equal in the sight of God and everyone had the undeniable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But yet we denied that right to an entire race of people, and God took issue with it. And I think of all of the sons and all the daughters of this country that laid out in the fields and were wet with the dew of heaven. I think of all the lives that died in that field.

And I remember Abraham Lincoln making a proclamation, and he said, the Civil War in this country will not cease until one life has been shed for every lash that's been put on every back of anybody we've kept captive in the nation. And we learned a lesson. And we had a president at that time and leaders of government that called for days of fasting and repentance, talked about the arrogance of the nation having set its judgment above the Word of God, having justified wrong and called it right.

We've done this once before as a nation, and we were chastised greatly by the hand of God for it and deservedly so. But you, Belshazzar, you've not humbled your heart though you knew this. You knew this, Belshazzar.

You knew that God humbles peoples and nations and leaders and rulers and societies that fail to walk in truth. And you've lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven, and you brought the vessels of his house before you, you and your lords and your wives and your concubines. In other words, one more time, you've begun to deal lightly with the truth of God's Word.

One more time, you set your judgment above the things that are holy. And you've praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, and iron. In other words, you felt there's nothing can stop you.

You're on a journey now. And oh, how wonderful this journey is going to be and how your wealth and how your status and how your power are going to get you there. But you do not understand that these things that you're worshiping today don't see, they don't know.

And the God who holds your breath in his hand and owns all your ways, you've not glorified. Therefore, this hand was sent from God and the writing on the wall says, you've been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

God has numbered your days of your kingdom and finished it. The party's over, living your own way, doing your own thing, worshiping God or worshiping whatever you want to worship in the way you think it can be worshiped. The days of calling evil good and good evil, it's over.

It's over. Every nation will learn this eventually. I pray God that we might have the understanding that they didn't have.

They had no idea that they were completely surrounded by their enemies. They had no idea the Medes and Persians had come in. They had no idea their kingdom was finished.

And it's such an incredulous moment that Daniel has just said to Belshazzar, your kingdom is finished. It's over. Belshazzar, what does he do? He gave the command to those around.

They clothed Daniel with purple. They put a chain of gold around his neck and made a proclamation that he's now the third ruler in the kingdom. And he had just told him your kingdom is over.

You talk about spiritual blindness. It must have been such an incredulous moment as Daniel is standing there. And he's just told this man, you would think it would bring him to his knees.

You would think it would cause some kind of a searching of one's heart, but I'm telling you, history records that people can get so dark that the party's over and they don't know it. They're promoting a man to third ruler in the kingdom was just said, your kingdom is over. It's finished.

God's numbered it. And that very night, Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans and the Babylonians was slain. And Darius, the Mede received the kingdom being about 62 years old.

In other words, that kingdom was now replaced by another. Now the good news is that it was under the Medes and Persians that Cyrus, the king issued a decree, letting the people of God go home and rebuild the testimony of God that they were supposed to be in the earth. And my prayer tonight for you, my prayer for this city, my prayer for this nation is God put an end to this rebellion and raise up, raise up another moment in America, another moment of mercy, another moment where the people of God are given the power to go back and rebuild that which has been torn down and destroyed, to rebuild that which has become a reproach in the earth.

God, give us the courage to get up and become builders again. Give us the courage to go back to living lives of righteousness in the sight of God. Give us the courage to go back, Oh God, into the closet of prayer.

Give us the courage to begin to live for others and not for ourselves. Give us the courage to speak the word of God as Daniel did no matter the consequence, whether people hear it or whether they don't, but Oh God, tear down, bring up, tear down this moment of lawlessness and give us an opportunity of mercy. That your house, that your testimony, that your kingdom can be rebuilt in this nation one more time for one last moment of mercy in every town, in every city, in every church, in every home, in every borough, in every apartment, in every school, in every college, in every daycare.

You see, the difference is when they put the holy things to their lips, they had no intention of living for God or praising him. And that brought an end to the whole thing. But when we go to the communion table tonight and we touch our lips with the juice that represents the shed blood of Christ, that we might not only be saved, but have access now to the throne of God and the bread, which represents the promises of God to be our strength, to give us the power to be the people of God in our generation.

We are not putting those things to our lips tonight and praising the gods of gold and silver and wood and stone. We're praising the one true God of heaven, Jesus Christ, the son of God, who's the only name given. And when we put that, those elements to our lips, let it be in our hearts tonight to say, oh God, oh God, oh God, let my life count for your glory.

And let me get up and be part of this moment of rebuilding that which has been torn down. Let me not be a partaker of those who sit at this table and touch their lips with the holy things of God in a drunken stupor, praising everything under the sun, except the sun. Let me not be a partaker.

Let our hearts be pure. Let our hearts be clean. Let our motives be right.

Let us be lined up with truth. Let our prayers have power. Let hell begin to shake when we pray.

This is the cry of my heart. This is my prayer for you. As your pastor, I have one purpose in life now standing in this pulpit.

It's that you would find your full stride in God, the full measure of what God has for you, that you will not come one foot short of it, but you will find what God has for your life. You will walk in that and you will be part of that testimony of a city set upon a hill that cannot be hidden. That your speech will have weight.

Your life will be a testimony. Your prayers will have power. That people will find heaven and be set free from hell because of you.

Just because you live in a neighborhood, you work in a certain place and you walk down that street. Glory to God. Glory to God.

Glory to God. Glory to God. Glory to God.

Glory to God. We are not just observers in this last moment of history. We are the church of the living God.

We bear the spirit of God. The third person of the Trinity, the triune God lives in these earthen vessels. God will break us out of the confines of weakness.

God will give us the power to pray. God will give us the ability to believe. God will raise up his church again in this generation.

Hallelujah.

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