

# The Testimony of an Honest Man

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of honesty in seeking a personal relationship with Christ for true spiritual transformation.*

**Duration:** 53:37

**Scripture:** Matthew 8:3-9, John 1:45

**Topics:** "Honesty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the testimony of an honest man. He begins by praying for the anointing of the Holy Spirit and asks for God's guidance and cleansing. The preacher emphasizes the importance of truth and sincerity in the church, urging the congregation to be honest and genuine in their faith. He references the story of Joshua in the Bible, highlighting how God empowers and justifies those who desire truth. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God's grace is the testimony of the honest Christian, enabling them to build a strong Christian life.

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## 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. John Chapter 1, please, in the New Testament.

John Chapter 1. I want to speak to you this morning about the testimony of an honest man. The testimony of an honest man. While you're turning there, let's pray together.

Father, Almighty God, I thank you, Lord. I thank you for your mercy and your power. I thank you, Lord, that it's not your will that any should perish, but that all should come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

God, I ask for an anointing of the Holy Spirit today, Lord, that you may come and give life to your word, and let your word and the intents of your heart find its mark in every heart that's in this house. Lord, it's not your will that any should perish, and I'm asking, God, for you, Jesus, to reveal yourself to every heart, to every life, every situation, every mind, every person who's in this house. Lord, use the frailty of this vessel

and multiply your life through me.

God, I stand behind the cross. I stand in frailty. I stand like Paul in weakness.

But in my weakness, Lord, you are made strong. Be strong today, Lord. For your name's sake, Jesus, be strong, and deliver your people, God, from every work of the enemy.

And I ask it, and I believe, God, that you will do as I've asked you today, because I ask it, Father, in Jesus' name. John chapter 1, beginning at verse 45. This is right in the beginning of the Gospel of John, where Jesus is calling, according to John, his disciples.

John 1.45, And Jesus answered and said, Now, in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 16, we have the account of Peter, the apostle, responding to the question of Jesus. Now, Jesus asked this question to his disciples. He said, Who do people say that I am? And so, of course, they all started to say different things.

Some say you're John the Baptist. Some say you're one of the prophets. Then he asked a very direct and a personal question.

He said to them, But who do you say? In spite of what others are saying, you've walked with me. Now, at this point, they have quite a history with God. And he says to them, Who do you say that I am? And Peter responds, and he says, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Now, we've often viewed this as the first, as it is, profound revelation of the divinity and the purpose of Jesus Christ. Because Peter was saying, You are the Christ. You're the promised one.

You're the one that Isaiah spoke about. You're the one that we've read about in the Old Testament prophets that's going to come and wash away the sin of Israel and take us out of this place of being subjected to all of our enemies. And you're going to bring us into a place of victory.

So, this was very, very profound. And he says also, You're the Son of the living God. Now, Peter's statement had come after much personal witness of the person of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 8 of Matthew, he saw a leper healed, for example. A storm quieted just simply by the voice of Jesus Christ. He knew that this man had the power to calm storms and stop wind.

Chapter 9, Peter was among those who saw the ruler Jairus, his daughter, raised from the dead. So, he knew he's walking with a man who can raise people from the dead. He saw the blind see.

He heard the dumb speak. Chapter 14, he saw thousands of people fed. As little provision as it is was miraculously multiplied and given to the multitudes.

And of course, also in chapter 14, he saw Jesus come to him walking on the water. Now, Jesus asked him a question. Who do you say that I am? You who have a history with God.

That's an interesting question this morning. I think of the multitudes of people who have come to this church or perhaps attended churches throughout the years. And you have a history with God.

You've heard testimonies. You've seen God raise up people. You've heard their story of how we were frail and weak and blind and lame and dumb.

And you've seen the power of God come upon people and calm our storms. And yet you sit here and Jesus says to you, who do you say? It doesn't matter who Pastor Carter says I am or any of the other pastors or leaders. Ultimately, the question is asked to you as an individual.

Who do you say? Because until you are able to say it, there will really be no personal application as it is. Of all the strength and all the power that you've seen will just be a history lesson. You'll know all about God, but have no personal intimate relationship with him.

Peter says in Matthew 16, you're the Christ. You're the son of the living God. And Jesus says to him in verse 17, he said, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood is not revealed unto thee, but my father, which is in heaven.

The word blessed in the Greek text means you are indwelt or you will be indwelt and fully satisfied by the presence of God. That's an amazing thing when you see that. If I were able to expand on that, I could say Jesus looked at Peter and said, Peter, you will be fully indwelt and satisfied by the presence of God because you personally know who Jesus Christ is.

You have a personal application. And Jesus says to Peter, but you've not arrived. You're blessed because you're going to be indwelt and satisfied, but you've not arrived at this conclusion through any natural ability.

Remember that Christ said to him, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you. The word for revealed actually means unveiled, lifting off of a veil. He says you are blessed because it is God who has unveiled to you who Jesus Christ is to you personally.

And today, if you know Christ is to you personally, you are blessed with Peter. You are blessed if you know Christ is. If you're able to say it, it doesn't matter what anybody else says.

Jesus is the Christ to me. He is God's provision for my every need. He is my cleansing, my power.

He is my new mind that I belong for. He is the new heart that I've wanted. He is the power that will rise me up out of the mediocrity as it is of my own natural ability and take me into the supernatural ability of God.

You see, only God can unveil that to you. I can't teach it to you. I could take you home personally today and open these scriptures and preach to you 24 hours a day for the next five years.

And unless God reveals it to you, there will be no difference. You will know a lot about Jesus Christ until the point that God unveils Him. And you and I begin to see, God, this is not about some historical Christ that's for a few that have this wonderful testimony, but this is Christ who came and was crucified and raised from the dead for me.

I see who you are, Jesus. I understand your heart for me. I know why you came.

And by God's grace, I'm going to lay hold of your power. And Jesus says to Peter, you are blessed because you've not learned this, even by personal experience, as wonderful as that personal experience was. You remember the children of Israel, all the manifestations of God's glory that they had seen coming out of Egypt, but yet could not arrive at the conclusion that the Savior, that Almighty God was a God for them.

It was all history. It was all just yesterday, what God had done. But there was no absolute revelation of Christ in the heart.

Now, in John chapter 1, we have an interaction between Christ and a man. And this interaction with Nathaniel is less famous than the interaction with Peter. But I want to suggest to you that even though it's less famous, it's more profound.

This is an incredible interaction. And there's a testimony about to be revealed through a man who Christ says is without guile. Guile is deception, inward deception.

And in this instance, it's an inward deception towards God. Here's a man who's coming to God, and he's honest. In other words, God says, here's an honest man.

I can speak to him, and he will hear me. I can tell him things about his own heart, and he will not present a defense. He will not be guileful.

It's actually evidenced, the truth that's in this man is evidenced by the fact that Christ says to him, here's an Israelite who's without guile, and immediately he says, how do you know me? Now, a guileful man would say, well, you know, he would offer excuses about himself. He'd try to be humble, but he would not accept Christ's opinion of himself. And he says, where do you know me from? How do you know that I have an honest heart? How do you know that I'm an honest seeker of God? Now, Nathaniel was, of course, at the beginning very skeptical.

I think some are skeptical here this morning. You've been invited to church by somebody, and you've come in. And Philip, it says, found Nathaniel and said to him, we found him.

And I know that there are some here this morning, education, annex, overflow rooms, wherever you are, that somebody invited you here. And their testimony was exactly like Philip's to Nathaniel. They said to you, we found him.

I found him. I found God. I found the Son of God.

I found everything I've ever been looking for. I found God's promises to me. My life has changed.

And so you've accepted the invitation, and you're here. But you're skeptical, just like Nathaniel. And he said, of whom Moses and the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathaniel said to him, can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth? And some of you have probably said, can there be any good thing in Times Square? Is it possible that God could really have a people there, a testimony, a church? And Nathaniel said unto him, rather, verse 47, it says, Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him and said to him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Now, yes, he was skeptical, but deep inside he was an honest man. Deep inside, he's a man that God could reckon with.

He could hear truth if it was coming from a truthful source. You know, Christ calls him an Israelite. And, of course, this is after his ancestor Jacob, in Genesis chapter 28, who the name Jacob, of course, means deceiver.

You remember the story of Jacob, how he tried to, he actually didn't try, he did. He stole his brother Esau's blessing. And he stole it by deception.

And so God sent him into the wilderness to his uncle Laban, who was more deceiving than he was. And uncle Laban taught him a wonderful lesson over the next 14 years. To the point where he got tired of deception.

He was sick of himself. He was sick of what he was. And then the Lord, as he begins to be sick of this inward corruption, you see, this is really, it doesn't mean that Nathaniel is a perfect man.

It means Nathaniel, the scripture says, is an honest man. There's a difference. An honest man is not perfect.

An honest man is just sick of his dishonesty. An honest man wants truth. He wants it in his life.

He wants it in his heart. He wants it in his home. He wants it to come out of his mouth as it is.

And really, that's what Jesus is saying. He's not saying here is a perfect man. Here's an honest man.

Here's a man that I can speak to, who's not going to try to manipulate the words of God. God will speak to his heart. He'll offer no defense.

He'll simply agree with me. And it's an amazing thing when you begin to see it. And then Jesus said, now he's an Israelite.

Now, Jacob got very tired of the deception. And God called him back again into the land of promise. But as he's heading back to the promised land, he's got to now confront a lot of the old issues in his life.

And there was a brook called Jabbok. And at that particular place, Jacob, the Bible says, very clearly wrestled with God. I don't know how a man wrestles.

I don't fully understand that. Other than in the prayer closet, there have been, in my own life, I can say deep wrestling times with God. When he's been trying to speak to me.

And I've been trying to resist what he's been speaking. But after this face-to-face encounter with God, he's given a new name. And God says to Jacob, I no longer call you.

He actually wrestled with him. And it was the break of the day. And the Lord said, Jacob, let me go.

And Jacob says, no, I'm not letting you go until you bless me. I've stolen the blessing. I've gotten it by fraud.

But I realize I can't go back. I can't go home. I can't face the things I've got to face in my life unless I have the real blessing of God.

I thought I could steal it. I thought I could manipulate it. But I can't.

And all of my past is caught up to me. And so the Lord says to him, what's your name? And you see, that's the evidence of an honest man. You see, the last time he was asked that question by his father, he had said, my name is Esau.

He had lied when he tried to get the blessing. You see, you can't get the blessing of God if you're a liar. You can't get the blessing of God if you're not honest.

He had gotten a blessing, yes, and it did ultimately come from the hand of God. But he paid a terrible price for this deception in him. And now he says, God, I need your blessing because I can't face what I've got to face tomorrow.

And I tell you, beloved, if you're a Christian, especially, or at least if you have the name of God on your lips, you cannot face what you have to face tomorrow without the blessing of God on your life. There are difficult days ahead. And some of you are living in difficult days right now.

You've got to go home to difficult work situations and home situations. And just even the issues of your own heart are difficult enough without even thinking about anything else around you. You've come to the house of God this morning, just like Jacob did.

And you said, God, I want your blessing. I've not come here for any more religion. I've not come here for any more excuses or powerless theologies.

I want your presence in my life. God looks at Jacob and says, what is your name? If you want me to bless you, tell me your name. And he says his name, which really means deceiver.

He says, my name is deceiver. It's amazing when you really see it. Then the Lord says, I'm changing your name now.

And your name is going to be called Israel because as a prince, you're a prince now. You have prevailed with God and you will also prevail with man. It's an incredible thing.

He said, you have touched God and God has touched you now. Yes, and God put a little limp into his thigh to remind him the rest of his life to walk honestly before him. But he says, you've touched my heart.

My heart has now touched yours. And through your life, I'm going to be able to touch men and women and young people all around you throughout the world. Now, Christ calls this man Nathaniel, who's a descendant of Jacob.

He says, now, here's an Israelite. And that's really key because it's possible and perhaps probable that Nathaniel had had a similar encounter with God. Remember that God said to Jacob, I change your name to Israel because you've prevailed with God and you've prevailed with man.

And he gave him a new name and he gave him promises, incredible promises that through him, all the nations of the world were going to be blessed. And now here's a distant descendant of Jacob. And this man is named Nathaniel and Christ calls him an Israelite.

In other words, he doesn't say you're anything else. He says you're an Israelite because you've had this face to face encounter. I believe that as I read the scriptures, there's there's something about this.

If there is something deep and spiritual in this passage, otherwise this man would be just a dimwit, be just a dimwit. He'd be just a no thinking man who's meets the living Christ. And Christ says, I saw you under the fig tree.

The next question should have been, when did you see me? When did you pass by? Now, there's something more to this scripture. There's something more that gives this man this spiritual insight. You see, because he's an honest man and an honest man will get spiritual insight that a dishonest man will never get.

I see people in the church who sit under preaching of the gospel for years and never seem to grow in grace. Never seem to understand Jesus Christ. Don't move from image to image and glory to glory because there is a deceptiveness in the heart that God can never get to.

They will wrestle but never say their name, never agree with God. And I think Nathaniel is a man who's tired of deception, a man who wants truth, a man who's simply longing in his heart to live and build by what is right. And if you are that way this morning, you are a blessed man or woman.

If you finally come to this house and said, Lord, I'm not interested in any more religion. I've had enough. I don't want any more theories about God.

There's so much confusion in the world and even in the church world. I want the living Christ. And I know there are people here today just crying out saying, Jesus, if you're real, show me.

Show me who you are. There's a longing in your heart to live and build by what is right. God, you created my life and you created me for a purpose.

I don't care if you're the worst sinner in New York City sitting here today. You know this. There's an inner knowledge because you were created by God.

You're not a fluke of the universe. You're created by God. He allowed you to be conceived in your mother's womb.

He allowed you to be born. God breathed in you. You didn't breathe on your own.

God breathed into you. There's this longing in your heart. Whether you belong to the mafia, whether you're out there deceiving people, no matter what you're doing.

There's a longing in your heart to do what is right and to live. You cannot escape it. It's in every man.

It's in every woman. Try to hide as you will. Try to run behind deception.

That longing is still in your heart. You know it. I know it.

And God knows it. Go to Zechariah, please, in the Old Testament, chapter 3. Now, Zechariah is two books backwards from Matthew. Second last book in the Old Testament.

Zechariah, chapter 3. Now, it tells us a similar story. Now, in Zechariah is a prophet that is raised up. He's one of two prophets that God raises up after the people of Israel came back from captivity.

The Babylonian captivity lasted a certain number of years. The people of Israel returned. They started to build, but they faced terrible opposition in their building.

And they finally ended up giving up. And I know there's people here like that as well this morning. You heard the gospel maybe 15 years ago.

You set out to be a Christian and tried to build, but you faced horrible opposition. Because of it, you came to the conclusion that this is hopeless. How am I ever going to be able to live this Christian life? How can I ever live up to the standards of God that are in this book? And it's sad to say many people who get to that place in their life, they settle into a life of spiritual deception.

They deceive other people in the house of God about their spiritual condition and ultimately deceive themselves about their walk with God. They can live almost any way they want and somehow be convinced that this is pleasing to God, this is acceptable with God, even though the Scripture may call it an abomination in the sight of God. Now, in Zechariah, the people had come out and faced horrible opposition.

And there's a high priest called Joshua that ends up called before the throne of God. This is an entire spiritual lesson that we're about to see. And he's called before the throne of God.

And we see through this why the people are not able to finish building what they've started building. In Zechariah 3, verse 1, it says, And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. Now, he's longing to build, but he's being fiercely resisted.

Did you know you have an enemy? You have an enemy that hates the life of God in you. You have an enemy that hates you even before you have the life of God in you. He will resist you from even understanding the message of Jesus Christ.

And once you have understood it, he will come against you with every deceptive tactic he has in his pile of evil weaponry to try to convince you somehow this life is for others, but it will never amount to anything for you. In verse 2, it says, And the Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuked thee, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuked thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel.

And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused that iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. Now the Lord is the one who rebuked Satan.

You and I cannot fight him in our own strength. We have no power to fight him. That's why Christ came to the earth, became a man, died on a cross, and rose again from the dead on the third day.

And the scripture tells us that when he rose, he took captivity captive. He took captive the power of the devil and the power of every spiritual enemy that will ever come against you and gave gifts unto men. Of course, the greatest gift is his own righteousness.

And he gave us his strength. He gave us the power. He gave us a new mind.

He gave us a way to follow that we may live the life of God. And he said, The Lord said, Satan, I rebuke you because I have chosen Jerusalem. This is a brand plucked out of the fire.

Yes, the whole world may have given up on you, but when you cried out to Christ, you have won much mightier than the whole world that came to your aid who loves you with a passionate love. And he says, Yes, the whole world may write you off, but I plucked you out of the fire. I plucked you.

Jesus himself says, I rebuke you, Satan. I've taken this one to myself. And whom I've cleansed, you dare not call common or unclean anymore.

Whom I've empowered, you dare not call powerless anymore. How dare you stand against the child of God who has come to me and standing before me in honesty. You see, Joshua's standing there in

honesty.

Joshua has no boast. He's failed. The children of Israel have failed.

He knows they've failed. He's standing before the throne. He's been about 16 years in the rebuilding of this temple, and all they've done is lay the foundation.

There's no glorious gates. There's no glorious walls. There's no sacrifice being reinstated for the people.

No awareness of God. And he's standing there in his failure, and he knows he's standing in his failure. Beloved, now we see a transaction that is phenomenal, because it's not by might nor by power.

It's by my Spirit. It's the grace of God. It's the mercy of God that gives us the power to build the Christian life.

Satan is standing at his hand, accusing him. Look at what he's done. Look at the futility of his effort.

Look at the little life he's built. The promises you gave him. You called him out of darkness, and look at what he is.

And the Lord, instead of listening to the devil's argument, says, I rebuke you. I've plucked him out of the fire. I've taken him to myself, and he is mine.

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel. And he answered and spoke to those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said, Behold, I've caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with a change of raiment.

You see, the Lord says, I will empower, I will justify, and I will change those who desire truth. All you have to be is honest. He was not successful.

He had failed in his commission to a large extent, but he's standing there and he's honest. And God says, I will change. I will empower.

I will wash away your iniquity. I will give you a new heart, a new mind, a new life. And I said in verse 5, Let them set a fair mightier upon his head.

Now that's the turban that the priesthood wore. In other words, restore him. He is called to be a priest to me.

The Scripture says clearly in the New Testament, we are priests and kings unto the Lord. We're called to rule and reign with Christ. And so they set a fair mightier upon his head and clothed him with the garments, and the angel of the Lord stood by.

And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, verse 7, If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. Amazing. He says, Joshua, if you will obey me.

Joshua, if you will let me speak to you. Joshua, if you will walk in my ways. Now, he's not yet fully explained it all to them.

But the moment we are cleansed of our sin, God begins to speak to us about a walk. He begins to speak to us about a life that we're to live. How we're to represent Him in our homes and families and on the earth.

He begins to speak about these things. And He says, If you will do these things, I'll give you places to walk among these that stand by. Now, these He's speaking about are angels.

There are angels all around. They're heavenly beings. You can look at any commentary and you'll find it.

They're angels. And the Lord says, Joshua, if you will obey me, if you'll walk before me in truth, you're going to walk with angels. Now, angels have the capability, as it is, to do what God asks them to do.

Angels know the mind of God. They're given instruction by God. And they have the power to fulfill what God has asked them to do and to be.

If God says to an angel, take a coal off the altar and touch this man's lips, he doesn't have to go into the prayer closet. He's walking with God. He's in right relationship.

He has not only the commission, the understanding, but he has the power to perform it. That's really what God is saying to Joshua. You will understand my ways.

You'll understand my work. And I will give you the power to perform what I ask you to do. It's amazing when you see it.

You will walk among angels, as it is. He says in verse 8, he said, Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at. For behold, I'll bring forth my servant the branch.

Now, in another translation, in the NIV, it says it this way. He said, Now hear this, O Joshua, and those who are your fellows. He's not talking about angels anymore.

Now he's talking about those who are in ministry, as it is, the ministry of God with Joshua. And he says, they are men wondered at. In other words, they're men who are symbolic of things to come.

God says, I'm going to do a work in you, Joshua, and I'm going to do a work in people who will just simply come into my presence and obey me. And they will be men and women who are wondered at. Those that are led by truth will be wondered at.

And amazement, really, is what it means. You know that God wants to make your life an amazement. Wondered at.

Where did he get this power? Where did she get the authority to change? Where did this kindness come from that was never there before? I've known him to be a grouchy old man all of my life, and all of a sudden he's kind. And the Scripture says that you will be wondered at. There will be a power within you that will cause people around you to look in amazement.

That's really what he's saying. And here's how it's going to happen. He says, behold, I will bring forth my servant, the branch.

Now, we know conclusively that's Jesus Christ. You don't even have to reprove that point. He says, I'm going to bring forth a servant.

This servant is Christ. Here's how it's going to happen. For behold, the stone that I've laid before Joshua, and upon one stone shall be seven eyes, and I will engrave the engraving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

In other words, I'm going to bring forth my servant. He's a man who's going to have all knowledge. He talks about a stone with seven eyes.

He's going to know. He's omniscient. He knows everything.

He's going to walk, and he's going to have within himself the knowledge of God. He's going to be the cornerstone of a new house that I'm building. And this house is going to be built by God's power, coming to those who have honest hearts, and causing them as living stones to be raised up in their generation, and people will have to stand back in wonderment.

Now, you know the end of the story. They were able to build the wall. Actually, it's in Nehemiah's time.

They rebuilt the temple, and later on in Nehemiah's day, they were able to rebuild the wall in only 52 days. And the people marveled, the Scripture says. They looked back and said, How could this have been built in such a short time? And he says, I will engrave the engravings thereof.

In other words, I have the purpose and knowledge of God will be written in him. Everything that he speaks will be the Word of God. He will be the witness of God.

He will be God Almighty incarnate in human flesh. And he will remove the iniquity of the land in one day. In one day, he's going to deal with the sin issue.

In one day, he's going to deal with that which Satan has access in the person's life to cause him to be able to accuse him before the throne of God. He says, in one day, he's going to come. He will have all knowledge.

He will have the power of God, the Word of God flowing through him. And in one day, he's going to deal with the issue of sin. And we know that day was 2,000 years ago on Calvary.

And then he says, in that day, verse 10, saith the Lord of hosts, shall you call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree? And really, that really means into a place of rest and prosperity and peace. In that day, he says, you're going to reach out, and every man's going to start calling his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree. They're going to go to their neighbor and say, come, I have found the one that we have longed for.

I know who he is. His name is Jesus Christ. The son of Joseph.

He's a carpenter from Nazareth. I've found him. I've found him.

He says, in that day, there are going to be people going to people all over the land saying, I've found him. I've found him. I've found him.

Come with me, and you're going to find the rest you've been longing for. Come with me, you're going to find the freedom that God has promised you. You're going to prosper.

Come with me. Now, Jesus calls Nathanael, and he says, here's an Israelite in whom is no guile. There's no deception in this man.

He's an honest man, an honest seeker of God. And Nathanael says to him, how do you know me? Where do you know me from? And Jesus says these incredible words. Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

I believe in my heart that Jesus is not speaking of the past. He's speaking of the future. He said, before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.

I saw you prospering. I saw you at rest. I saw you forgiven.

I saw you empowered. I saw you, Nathanael, in the place where you have longed to be all your life. I saw you.

I saw you. Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree. And Nathanael, because he's an honest man, he looks at him and says, Oh, Rabbi, you are the Son of God.

You are the King of Israel. Nobody else could give me such hope. I've never heard another voice like this.

Only you could know the longing of my heart. I've longed for this rest. I've read the Scripture.

I've known there's a day coming when I would hear a voice calling me to rest again. And, oh, God, only you're the only one who's ever called me in a manner that I can hear. I hear you, Jesus.

I hear you. Because he was a man without guile. He was an honest man in his heart.

And he could hear Him. Jesus said, My sheep know My voice. They know My voice.

It's as if Christ came in. I know there's people invited here to church today. And maybe somebody called you and invited you.

And it's like the voice of Christ says to you today, Before your friend called you, I saw you at rest. I saw you forgiven. I saw you empowered.

I saw you a new man, a new woman. I saw you out from under the burden of your sins. And I saw you because you're an honest person in your heart.

You want truth. And I can speak to you. And you know the voice of God calling you.

In Genesis, Jacob, as he was heading down into this place where he'd be dealt with by God, Scripture says he laid down in a certain place and had a dream. And he saw a ladder going from earth to heaven. And the angels of God were ascending and descending on this ladder.

And at the top of the ladder, the Scripture says God Almighty stood there. And God was at the top looking down as it was. And He said, Jacob, I'm going to bless you.

And He said, I'm going to provide for you. And I'm going to bless you so much that through your life, the whole world is going to be blessed. Now, of course, we know that Christ was going to come through His lineage.

But you see, the Lord was standing above the ladder. And Jesus says to Nathaniel, He said, You're going to see greater things than these. He said, Verily I say to you, Hereafter, from this time forward, you're going to see heaven open.

The angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. You see, there's a difference between this Scripture and Genesis. In Genesis, it was the angels of God ascending and descending upon the earth.

God was still in heaven and man was still, in a sense, His contact with God was through prophets and angels and all these other beings as they saw it. But He says, Now, you're going to see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. You're going to see that I am, Nathaniel, the fulfillment of the promise of God that was made to your forefather.

You're going to see that the power of God is resident in me. That everything that heaven has is in me. Everything that's been promised to you is in me.

You're going to see this power of God. You're going to see the heavens opened. And you're going to understand that the power of God is given to those who have an honest heart.

When we go back into Zechariah, if you go into chapter 4, God begins now to speak to Joshua, the high priest. And He showed him a reservoir of oil. And He showed him lamps that never burn out.

And now He was introducing him once his filthy garments were clean. And once his mind was open to the voice of God, now He's showing him the reservoir of power that is available. These are lamps that are never extinguished because they are filled as it is by the presence of God which flows into these lamps.

That's why Christ Himself said, We are the light of the world. We are indwelt by God. We are fully satisfied.

We give out, but we are never empty. There's a constant source and supply of God coming into our lives, ever-changing, ever-empowering, ever-helping. And then He tells him, Joshua, it's not by might nor by power, but it's by My Spirit, says the Lord.

He says, Joshua, you're going to head out and you're going to build. And you're going to face mountains. But every mountain before you is going to be flattened out.

It's going to become a plain. He says, your hand and mine, working together, are going to lay the cornerstone of what I'm about to build into your life. And when it's all over, you're going to shout, Grace! Grace! Grace is the testimony of the honest Christian.

It's not been by my hand. It's been by the power of God flowing through me. It's been the life of God in me, changing me, molding me, taking me, making me what I couldn't be and taking me where I couldn't go, speaking to me words I could never hear unless God in His grace spoke them to me, guiding me, leading me, making me into a person to be wondered at among those who are without the life of God.

And when it's all over, He says, you're going to shout, Grace! Grace! Grace! Grace! Grace! The absolute goodness of God. This is the life of the Christian. It's the inheritance that's yours through Christ if you have

an honest heart.

If you want to play games with God, you only deceive yourself. You cut yourself off from the power of God and the life of God. Oh, oh, Times Square Church, I don't want anybody in this house to end up in hell.

I don't want anybody in this house to end up living a mediocre Christian life of works and end up playing the hypocrite in the house of God when the power of heaven is there for you. The power of God is yours. An endless supply of God's grace.

An endless supply of His power. All He asks is an honest heart. All He asks for is a man or woman who stands before God and says, God, I'm failing.

I can't do this thing. I've built a foundation. I can't build a building.

I have no resources. I have no strength. I have no power.

And Christ says, Satan, I rebuke you. You see, I've cleansed this man. I've cleansed this woman.

And He's come before me in honesty today. And He said, before you came, before you even cried, I saw you. I saw you.

I saw you at rest. I saw you prospering in the grace of God. I saw you calling others to the house of God saying, I found Him.

I found Him. Come and see. Not even having to invite people to the house of God, but inviting them to your house and saying, come and see.

I found Him. And my life is the evidence of the reality of Almighty God through Jesus Christ. Come and see.

Examine my life. And you will see the grace and the power of God. There are people here today, you failed.

But you failed because you're trying in your own strength to be a Christian. You're trying in your own strength to do something you don't have the power to do. You're failing because you're not honest with God.

There's a deceptiveness. You've built these arguments around your behavior. Oh, that's just the way I am.

It's the way my father was, my mother was. That's the way I am. I'm this way because I was abused when I was young.

I'm this way because. I'm this way because. And you've built a deception and God can't speak to you.

God says, no, just let me speak to you. Let me talk to you. Let me guide you.

You see, the moment you agree with God and say, Lord, my garments are filthy. They're filthy. You've clothed me with the righteousness of Christ and I've made such a mess of it.

He says, if you'll walk with me, I'll give you the power of angels. I'll change you. I'll make you into a brand new person.

Your eyes are going to be open and you're going to see. You're going to see the angels of God, the power of heaven ascending and descending on the Son of Man. You're going to see greater things than these.

You see, because this is the gateway to rest. You're going to understand who Jesus Christ is. Today, I'm going to give an altar call.

If you're not saved, your life might be an absolute mess. But God is calling you and you can hear him today. You hear him.

You hear his voice calling you. I'm only human vessel. He started calling you long before I was preaching today.

You heard him in the worship. He was calling you because he loves you. Yes, you've made a mess.

But we all have. The Bible says we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And today he wants to give you a new life.

Wash your sin away and give you eternal life. But I'm also speaking to the Christian who's not honest. It's going to take courage to respond to this altar call today because there are people here who are going to have to say, God, I've built a foundation and the rest is a fraud.

It's a popsicle stick house that has been built supposedly for your glory. I'm not what I appear to be. I have a deception in my heart.

And the Lord says today I want to deal with it. Because if you will lay it down, if you will just agree with me, I'll open to you the windows of heaven. And you will understand the power of God.

If you will just have an honest heart. It's an amazing thing, an honest heart. Remember Jesus said, agree with your adversary quickly when you're in the way, lest he cast you into prison.

And you see when God is your adversary, you and I had better agree. When he's the one trying to speak, he says, agree or I'll cast you into a prison of your own deception. It'll be a prison of your own powerless religion.

Until you get finally so sick of it, you say, God, I want it your way. I'm coming to stand before your throne. And Lord, I'm trusting you for the power to be a Christian.

If the Holy Spirit has spoken to you today, in the education annex, I'd like you to slip out of your seats in the overflow rooms and just stand between the screens. Here in the main sanctuary, in the balcony, you can go to either exit. The main sanctuary, slip down.

If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you today, would you come and meet me at this altar? I'm going to pray for you. We're going to believe God for a major deliverance today. We're going to believe God for freedom in this house.

Would you all stand, please? If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, would you come? I want to read to you one of the Psalms that the Holy Spirit is just speaking to me for you. Hallelujah. Take courage.

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh,

they stumbled and fell.

Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, even in this will I be confident. In the time of trouble, he will hide me in his pavilion.

In the secret of his tabernacle, he will hide me. And he will set me up upon a rock. And now, and now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me.

And therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy. I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. Now the Lord says to you, now, now he's going to lift your head up above your enemies all around you.

All the weaknesses, everything that the devil has tried to do to you. All that he's tried to destroy in your life. God says, now I'm going to lift your head up.

You've come to me. You're being honest before me. You're agreeing with me.

I'm going to lift your head up now. And I'm going to give you authority and power over everything that tries to destroy the work of my life in you. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus Christ. I come before you. And I ask you.

To give me an honesty. In my heart. That you can speak to me.

About anything. In my life. And I will not.

Resist your voice. For I know. That you speak to me.

For good. And not for evil. You speak to me.

Because you love me. And you want to lead me out. Of powerlessness.

And into the full provision. That you have. For my life.

Thank you. For plucking me. Out of the fire.

Thank you. For cleansing me. From all of my sin.

Thank you. For opening my eyes. To who Jesus Christ is.

Jesus. I say. You are my Christ.

You are my Messiah. You are my God. You are my power.

You are my cleansing. You are my provision. You are everything.

And all. That I will ever need. To live a Christian life.

I stand before you. I hear your voice today. And I say.

Jesus. Open my eyes. Let me understand.

The power of your kingdom. Give me faith. To believe.

Your promises to me. Give me integrity. To walk.

An honest walk. Before God. And before man.

You say. That you will make my life. A source of wonder.

A source of wonder. To many. Who are without God.

Now I yield to it. And I ask you Holy Spirit. To do this in my life.

Lead me. Guide me. Make me.

Change me. Let your will. Come into my life.

And make me. Into the person. That you have destined me to be.

I am destined. To walk among angels. Oh God thank you.

Oh God thank you. God thank you. Thank you Jesus.

Thank you mighty God. Thank you. Just praise you now.

Thank you God. Thank you Jesus. Thank you Lord.

Thank you God. Thank you mighty God. Thank you, Jesus! Thank you for power! Thank you, God! Thank you for the victory! Thank you! We praise you! We bless you, God! My glory in the lifter of my hands! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! My glory! My glory in the lifter of my hands! Oh, God, thank you! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, mighty God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh, Jesus! Oh, Jesus! Oh, Jesus! You're the Christ! You're the Son of the living God! We honor you, God! We honor you with our lives! We honor you with our hearts, oh God! We honor you, Lord! We honor you with everything that's in us! God, we honor you! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, mighty God! Thank you, mighty God! Hallelujah! Say it with me.

It's not by might. It's not by power. But by the Spirit of God that I will live the Christian life.

It's not by religion. It's by grace that I will become the person that God has destined me to be. Speak to me, God! Speak to my heart! Take away from me everything that offends you! Speak to me, oh God! Let me hear your voice! Let me know your power! God, enable me to call my family, to call my friends, and to say to them, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh God, I pray now that you bless your people.

I pray that you deliver your church all over the world. Deliver your church, God, from all the mediocrity in your name. God, bring the people again into your understanding.

Cleanse them and bring them into the true source of your life and power. Oh God, make the church here in Times Square a church to be wondered at throughout the world. My God, touch us all.

Guide us, lead us. I pray, oh God, that every week we come into this house and lift our hands and give you glory for the wonderful things that you have done. That we be a people of truth.

That we would see heaven open. Heaven open and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.  
That we would have true spiritual understanding, oh God.

Give us honest hearts. May there never be religious games in this house. Deliver us, God, from religious hypocrisy.

May it be truth, always truth, oh God, that is evident in us. Father, we thank you for it. We praise you in Jesus' mighty name.

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

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