

# The Testimony of Pastor Carter Conlon

by Carter Conlon

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*Pastor Carter Conlon shares his miraculous journey of how God chose him, a weak and troubled individual, to confound the wise and bring glory to Himself.*

**Duration:** 50:24

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:14-15, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:31, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:13, James 5:16, 1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 4:18

**Topics:** "Personal Testimony", "Redemption Through Faith"

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## Description

This sermon is a powerful testimony of a miraculous journey of faith, highlighting the transformation and redemption experienced through surrendering to God. It emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, restitution, and faithful service in the Christian walk, showcasing the supernatural work of God in ordinary lives. The speaker shares personal stories of encountering God's love, overcoming fear, and witnessing divine interventions, ultimately pointing to the life-changing impact of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Now, I've been asked to share my testimony tonight and, strangely enough, I haven't done that for years. I can't even recall, I think it was back about 17 years ago, the last time I actually remember sharing my testimony in Times Square Church. There's so much to say, I mean, I could keep you here all night, just sharing the things that God has done because it has been indeed a miraculous journey for me, nothing less than miraculous.

The Lord has taken me, and I often believe it's because He chooses the weak to confound the wise. He takes those things that are nothing to bring things that, in their own strength, think they are something. To an understanding of how weak all people really are without God, and in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we're given a strength that is not available to average people.

I was sitting at the table tonight, and I said, Lord, what do I say? And my heart's cry was just, God, let me be a drink offering that you can pour out to yourself tonight, because the testimony that any of us share from this podium or at any time is not about ourselves, for left to ourselves, all of us would be nothing. All we have is because of the mercy and the grace and the goodness of God. We would be reprobates without God.

We would be drunks and fornicators. Some in this room would have committed suicide. Some of you would have lost your minds.

Marriages would be broken, children would be bruised, and the power of hell would be literally rampaging all over us. What we have is because of the goodness of God. It's not because we deserve it.

And none of us do what we do because we have any characteristic within us that's different than anybody else. It's just simply God's choice. One time as a young pastor, I was starting to feel a little proud of myself.

And in my prayer time, I was saying, Lord, why did you choose me to be a pastor? It was a young church, it was in the country, and it was marginally, I suppose, coming into some form of revival. And I thought God was going to say, you know, well, you know, I looked down and I just saw such material to work with. I saw such a wonderful heart.

You know what the Lord said to me? It's because I already had a doormat. The position was vacant and I looked and you just happened to be there. It's not because any of us are special.

It's not because... And I stand here overwhelmed at what God has done. I was raised in a French-Canadian town in Quebec, Canada. My father is pure-blooded Irish, all the way back to the monkeys, as my mother-in-law used to say.

My father is pure-blooded Irish. And until he married my mother, who's French, the chain of Irish lineage was unbroken in our family. And I was raised in a mining town.

My father worked in a copper mine. It was just an average town of a lot of people who went to church. I don't think I ever met a Christian.

I'm a Bible-believing person in my entire teenage years. I was very happy as a child. And I remember when I was young, I was raised in a Catholic church.

And I'm not here to beat on any church, so please don't take what I share wrongly, if you happen to be Catholic here tonight. Catholic church, at least there I did get a knowledge that there was a God. I knew his name was Jesus.

I didn't know about the cross. I didn't know anything personally through it. But at least I knew about some of the things of God there.

And I do remember in my childhood this inner knowledge that there was a God. And I would go out in the swing set. I had a swing set outside.

And I would swing as a child. I was probably three years old, four years old. And I would just talk to God.

Now, we were taught to pray certain repetitious kind of prayers. But I knew that somehow I could just talk to God. And I could feel him talking to me.

Quite often you think that the choice may not have even been ours. It was God's. And he was always there.

How many here tonight can say that throughout the years, the early years of your life, you can remember the whispers of God? You didn't know what it was. But there seemed to be this whisper always coming to you about another life, another reason, another season, another purpose. I went to school.

And in the grade school years, I was a real troublemaker. I liked to cause trouble. I liked to put tacks on the floor.

We had a particular teacher that spent all his time walking up and down the aisle as he taught. And I would just be, to see how many tacks I could get stuck in his shoes before he found out what was happening, that kind of thing. I spent so much time outside the principal's office, it's a wonder that I ever got any kind of a diploma.

My teachers once asked my parents if I was on drugs. And I was in grade school because I was so active. There was a nun, though, in this school.

And she told me one day, in grade six, she said, Carter, Jesus told me that he's going to greatly use his life, your life, for his glory. And I remember looking at her like, first of all, I don't really get who Jesus is. And number two, I thought this lady just lived on another planet.

And she said, I don't care what people say. She said, the other nuns tell me I'm crazy to feel this way. But she said, I know what Jesus has told me.

She said, have you had any idea what God was going to do through your life? And although at the time I couldn't comprehend it, I never forgot it. And when I did get saved, when I did give my life to Christ, she was the first person I called. At that time, she was in a senior's home in Montreal, Canada.

And I called her and I said, do you remember me? I was the boy from grade six, seven, and eight. And you kept telling that Jesus was going to use my life. I said, well, I've just given my life to Jesus Christ.

And she said, only one thing to me. Make sure you go to church. Make sure you fellowship.

Make sure, make sure that you don't let what's coming into your life slip through your fingers. Now, I know some people have problems with the fact that she was a nun. But I don't.

No matter what the environment, there are ways that people can find God, even in the midst of it. It doesn't validate a particular religion. But God is big enough to reach people where they are.

The searching heart can find him. And there's no way that particular lady could have known that God was going to use my life, unless Jesus himself had spoken to her heart about it. So with me, it's not really an issue about these things.

My grandfather was a judge. And because the World War II came along, my father was denied an education. And being denied an education, it was a great, great loss in his life.

And I was his firstborn son. So after the war, he started to essentially live his life through me. I was going to be the lawyer in the family.

I was going to be the one that fulfilled everything that was denied him because of the economy, because of the circumstance that came into the world at that time. And a pressure was put upon me to succeed. And I was given the sense and the impression in my heart that if I failed to succeed at what was put before

me, that my life would be a failure.

It would be a waste. And so on one hand, there's this tremendous pressure to succeed. And on the other hand, there's the sense that I'm not going to be able to achieve what's put before me.

And at the age of 15, the two met and just simply imploded in my heart. And I began to suffer what is called panic attacks. If you've never had one, let me tell you, it's the nearest thing to hell on earth that you will ever experience in your lifetime.

These bouts of darkness come upon you as if there's no hope for tomorrow. Your heart begins to pound within your chest and you feel like you're going to die. You get afraid to leave the house.

I got to the point where I was afraid to get on a bus. I was afraid to walk into a room with five people unless they should fix their attention on me. And a panic attack would happen in my life.

Twice, I was taken from classrooms, once from a classroom, once from a university dormitory, to the hospital because of the severity of the panic attacks that came into my life. Once, the nurse took my blood pressure, dropped the machine on the floor, ran out of the emergency to get a doctor, fearing that I would die of a heart attack on the hospital gurney. So I do know what fear is all about.

I suffered these attacks from the time I was 15 till the time I was 24 years of age. I went to university. I studied.

I got an undergraduate degree. But in order to go to class at university, I had to take so many tranquilizers that I literally lived underwater. I felt like I was in a glass bubble everywhere I walked.

I could hardly talk. I'd have so many tranquilizers. And it was a miracle I could even study or get through those university years.

I hated life. I hated what was happening to me. And anger began to come into my heart.

I hated the injustice of having pressure put upon me with no ability to achieve it. I hated trying to become what other people thought my life should be. All I ever wanted to be was a motorcycle mechanic.

Do you know that? And yet, here I am in university. And I'm studying law and other topics. And I don't want to be there.

I don't want to do this. I'm afraid of the public. I don't want to live this way.

But yet, I did graduate. And after I graduated, I just needed a job, because I wanted to go to graduate school. I had no money.

And so I ended up joining the police department, not because I ever aspired to be a police officer. I just simply needed the money. I had long hair.

I was eating crackers at a bar one day. I walked by this. I was eating crackers because I was hungry.

I walked by the police department, had a slogan that said, if the hat fits, wear it. I walked in. I applied.

They hired me three weeks later. I'm standing in police college with my hair cut. And somebody's standing there yelling at me about two weeks after that, wondering, what in the world have I done? I don't even

want to be here.

You know, it was the hand of God, ultimately, because I was learning discipline. You have to know discipline to walk with God. There has to be a regard for authority.

There has to be something that God begins to work into your life. Teresa and I were married at this point. And our marriage was not going well.

Not because of her, because of me. I was angry all the time. I drank a lot.

I stayed out late. I had a very, very bad temper. And because of that, we had a son at this point, our oldest son, who's now a police officer in Canada.

And I didn't know how to be a father. I didn't want to be a father. I didn't want to be married.

I didn't like the way I was living. I just started to feel a hopelessness about everything around me. And in the midst of all of this, I started to get a stirring in my heart to wonder if there is a God.

And don't ask me where it came from. I think it just has to be God. He's just simply the same God that whispered to me when I was a little child is now whispering to me when I'm 24.

And I'm walking the beat. And I remember walking the beat in Ottawa, Canada, one day, and there's a church that was open. I don't know what kind of a church it was.

I walked in the door, and I sat in the back, and I said, hey, God, if you are real, I sure wouldn't mind knowing who you are. I said it out loud. I mean, if you'd be kind enough, if you've chosen to build all this stuff all over the place, could you kindly tell me who you are? And how do we find out who you are? And how do we live for you? Our marriage started to get worse.

And it was getting to the point where it was not looking very hopeful. And it came into my heart. I said, we were hanging out with a lot of college kids still.

And I said, Teresa, we need to broaden our horizons. We need to travel a little bit. Let's go to Europe.

Let's just backpack through Europe. Let's start in Paris. Let's go all the way to Greece or Turkey.

Let's just travel all over the place. And let's just broaden our thinking a little bit. And she said, that's a good idea.

So I got leave of absence from work. And we got our backpacks. We got our Eurail pass.

We got our plane tickets. And there was only one real problem in all this. I was so afraid of flying.

Now, Teresa had started to go to church with a couple of friends of hers. It was a Protestant church on top of everything else. And I didn't have a problem with it.

They started going to this church a few months before. And I would be heading out to work. And I kind of lived in a blood and guts world, if you understand the world of police work.

And I'm heading out the door. And they've got a Bible that's as big as one of the sections of this platform in the living room. And they're opening this thing.

And it's got pictures in it. And they're studying the word of God. But none of them know what they're talking about.

They know that even today. They've all got theories about it. It's like trying to describe an elephant.

And everybody's eyes are closed. And everybody's got a different piece of the animal trying to describe what God looks like. It was actually rather humorous to listen to some of it.

And Teresa had started going. And she said, Carter, why don't we just go to church before we fly to Paris? The bus station that was going to take us to the airport was like one block from this church she had been attending. And I didn't really want to go to church.

I didn't really like church. I didn't see myself fitting into church. Church was for a certain kind of person.

And I just didn't fit into that category of person. And I didn't think they'd like me. And I didn't like them.

So why bother with the whole exercise? And when I had been young, church to me was just a place where hypocrites gathered and stopped being hypocrites for an hour. And then they left their niceness and just went back to hypocrisy right after they were finished. So what's the point of being involved in any of this stuff? But the only reason I went is because I was so afraid of flying.

I was so afraid of flying. I thought if the plane crashes in the middle of the ocean and I'm standing at St. Peter's Gate, as I thought it was, at least I can say St. Peter should say, why should I let you into heaven? I could at least say, well, I was in church just yesterday. So I went to church with Teresa.

And I had jeans on, jean jacket, backpack, scruffy looking, longer hair, hadn't shaved for a little while. And I'm sitting in this church. And it's a fairly affluent church.

And I wasn't very affluent looking, or neither was I very affluent. And we're sitting there. And I didn't have a clue what the pastor was talking about.

He was talking about righteousness. I had heard of a singing group called the Righteous Brothers one time. You know, you never close your eyes anymore.

That's the Righteous Brothers. And I had heard of the Righteous Brothers. And he was talking about it.

And he pointed to where I was in the balcony and talked about the foolishness of being under the law. And I remember thinking, what is his problem with that? I'm a cop. Like, shouldn't people be under the law? What's wrong with this guy? And I didn't understand a word he said.

But I was very taken by the genuineness of the people. They seemed to be very genuine. And it's not something you just felt it in the place.

The handshakes were real. The smiles were genuine. Good to see you.

And it wasn't a formula. It was very, very, very real. And so they passed out a card.

And the card asked for your name and address and all that stuff. And then they had some boxes to check. One of them said, I want a box of offering envelopes.

I passed that one by. Another one was, I'd like to know what it is to be a Christian. And I remember thinking, well, I am a Christian.

I've always called myself a Christian. My baptismal certificate says I'm a Christian. But I'm not a Christian like these people are.

I wonder what they think a Christian is. So I checked it. And I put it in the offering.

That's all I put in the offering basket, I think, as well, that Sunday. And we headed off to Europe. And I got it in my heart that I'm going to find God in Europe.

Little did I know I'd be here talking about God in Europe many years later. But I thought, I got it in my heart and we're going to find God. So we landed in Paris and through almost every country in Europe.

And we ended up on an island in Greece called Eos. That's a long story. But all through Europe, we would get off the train in the center of town.

And I would get a map. And I would find the churches. So we're going to find God.

And so we started every place we went. We went to every synagogue, every church, everything we could find. We'd walk in.

I'd look. And some of it was beautiful. Some of it was ornate.

Some of it was really magnificent. But I'd walk in and just, no, no, no. God's not here.

And so finally, I got it in my heart that we've got to see the Pope. He must know where God is. Yet, Jesus is looking and said, it's true.

So we got on the train. We headed for Rome. We got off the train in Rome, went down to the Vatican.

And then, well, it doesn't take long to find out you can't get a personal audience with the Pope. So we waited out in St. Peter's Square with about 10,000 other people for the Pope to come out. And finally, I was so excited in my heart.

Finally, I'm going to find out where God is. This is an awesome moment. Now, he's way up there.

I mean, he's way, way up there. And the door's open. And he comes out to the balcony.

And he says something in Italian. Now, I don't speak Italian. And so there's a tour next to us.

And the tour guide happens to be Italian and English. So I said to the tour guide, I said, what did he say? And the tour guide said, he said, we need more churches. And I said, you've got to be kidding, man.

We need more churches. There's 300, and I started yelling at the guy. I said, there's 365 churches in Rome.

You know that there are? 365 churches in this city alone. We don't need more churches. We need to know where God is.

And the guy goes, OK, OK, OK, OK. So we came back to Canada. We flew back.

And what a disappointment, didn't find God. And we're at home about a week or two. And the phone rings. The telephone rings. And it's the pastor, the assistant pastor of that church that we had attended. And he thanked God for faithful men and women of the Lord.

And he said, I see that you checked off. And here you'd like to know what it's to be a Christian. He said, would you like us to send somebody to your house? I remember thinking, oh, goodness.

I had a vision of little old ladies coming to my house with a hat and a flower hanging off it. And they're going to tell me about God. You know, God is nice and God is good.

And I didn't want to be rude. And I thought, well, I did fill the card out. So OK, come to my house next Wednesday.

Hopefully, I won't be home. And the following Wednesday, the doorbell rings. Now, they don't know who I am.

They don't know how old I am. They never asked. And I never put it on the card.

They had a name, a phone number, and I checked one box. So they don't know anything about me. And the doorbell rings.

I answer the door. And there's a six-foot-two police officer standing there. And he says to me, are you Carter Conlon? And I said, yeah.

And he said, I'm from the church, this particular church that you attended. And I've come here because you asked for somebody to talk to you about God. And this guy so blew my image of what a Christian was out of the water.

He was a sharp guy. He was a career guy. He was intelligent.

He was just a really good guy. And he started to tell me what kind of a person he used to be. And it so intrigued me.

He said he had been a drunk and a gambler and a womanizer. And the guy I'm looking at is everything but what he's telling me. And it really intrigued me.

But I wasn't willing to take it at face value. And so he kept coming to my house, like, every Wednesday for, what, two months? I guess three months? Every Wednesday. I so discouraged them that when I got saved, he didn't believe it.

I'd offer him a beer. And he'd say, what kind of church do you go to? You can't have a beer like everybody drinks at the church I used to go to, you know, this kind of thing. And I started to really provoke him in my heart to try to see what this guy's made of.

Is it just a program that he's presenting to me, or does he really believe it? Is it true? Or is it a formula? Am I just another notch on his belt? Am I just somebody to bring into the fold, or does he actually care about me? And what really, really touched my heart is the fact that this man actually cared about my soul. Kept coming to my house, kept opening the scriptures to me, and finally provoked me just to read it for myself. And I got into the Gospel of John, and I read the Gospel of John.

And when I read it, I saw it. I saw who Jesus was. I saw what he did on the cross.

I saw my own condition. I saw the fact that he not only died for me, but had the rights to my life if I am called by his name. And so finally, after bantering and fighting back and forth with the Lord, it was May 12, 1978, at about 3.40 in the afternoon.

I was on my way to work. I was in uniform, in my car, driving to the police station. Finally, I'd come to the end of my road.

I couldn't fight against God any longer. I pulled over on the side of the road, and I said, Jesus, if what this man, Irv, his name was, has told me is the truth, if this is true, then I open my heart, and I ask you to come in and be my Lord and my Savior. Now, I didn't feel anything happen.

I put my car in drive. I went, and I finished my shifted work. But as God lives, as God lives, the next morning, I woke up, and I sat on the edge of my bed, and I knew I was a different man.

If Christ, the Bible says, if Christ be any man, in any man or person, they're a new creation. The old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

It doesn't happen overnight, guys, so don't get discouraged. It's line by line, little by little, step by step, brick by brick, this new life has begun to be built by the power of God within you. So don't get discouraged when it doesn't happen overnight.

Remember, last night, we talked about the fact that your sins are forgiven. Your frailties and sins and failings are not imputed against you. You're clean and righteous when you come to Jesus Christ, and then he begins to rebuild your life.

And I began to go to church. I knew nothing about God, but I was so zealous for the things of God. I remember a new believer's class.

The pastor said to me, to the class, and he was teaching with the book of Acts, and he said, you know, there used to be something called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but after the church, the first generation church, it was kind of lost. And I said, no, it's not. My wife took me to a charismatic meeting one time, and I said, those people really do love God, and they were speaking in tongues.

And I thought, he's going to be so excited. It's like I thought he'd feel like he'd lost his wallet, and I found it on the way home. Unfortunately, he wasn't very excited about it.

And then they asked him, who can read John 3.16? And I found it first in the Bible I had. And I read it. God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son.

Whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And he said, oh, great. He said, what translation are you reading from? I thought, translation? I don't even know what that is.

So I turned to the front of the Bible. When I graduated from police college, they gave every police officer a Bible. And in the front of it was a crest, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

So I said, it's the Royal Canadian Mounted Police version. He said, I didn't know they have one. And then I said, yeah, they do.

I said, look at this. The guy was very good about it. And so I kept on walking with God from there, and my life began to change slowly.

But I was ashamed of the gospel. It was very hard to make the break from the old friends. And if you've ever been in the military or police service, there's a huge pressure to conform.

Some guys wouldn't work with me anymore. They were afraid because I would tell the truth. I wouldn't beat people.

There were just things I wouldn't do. I did everything by the book, and I did it honestly and treated people as best as I knew with respect. And it cost me.

It really cost me at one point. But I was ashamed. Now, in church, I didn't mind.

Hello, brother. God bless you. Praise the Lord.

Open the hymn book. Sing all of the hymns with a fervency and a passion. But then I remember walking down the street with two of my buddies one time.

And here comes a real vocal Christian from my church. And I remember thinking, I'm looking for a manhole that I can climb down to listen. And one time, I walked into a shopping mall.

And this guy met me. And he's a big guy, loved God. And he put his arms around me.

He said, oh, Brother Carter, and lifted me off the ground and just held me there. Now, I'm a cop. I've got a gun and a uniform, and I'm just hanging there.

And I remember thinking, why am I not free like that? Why am I so bound? Why don't I have that? I am saved. I know I'm saved. But there's got to be more.

I can't seem to get Jesus out of my mouth. And I remember one day, I got so mad. I was driving my car down a particular street.

And I punched the steering wheel. I was so mad. And I said, Jesus, I'm going to serve you if it kills me.

And I went home. And I told my wife. I said, I made a vow to God today.

You're not supposed to make vows. But I made a vow. I said, I'm going to serve you if it kills me.

The next day, I went into work. And another Christian policeman came to me and said, hey, Carter, we're going down to the jail, a such-and-such a jail, to share about Jesus on Thursday night. He said, would you like to come with us? Now, there had been a riot there the week before.

And they had barricaded the doors and burned mattresses. And there'd been a real mess. And I said, Bob, if I go, he said, if there's a riot, I said, we'd never get out of there alive.

He said, I know. You're in or you're out. And I remember that my words came back.

And I thought, God, you didn't have to take me up on it so soon. And so we headed out that night. We're in full uniform.

We're not even going in incognito. You can't even turn your hat around and grab a broom if there's a riot. You're just in full uniform.

So we're going into this prison. And on the way, he said, I want to stop at this halfway house. It's a heavy-duty halfway house.

Most of the guys in there have committed major crimes. They're out on parole. And they found Christ in prison, or they say they have found Christ.

And this is kind of halfway to reintegration into society. And he said, there's a guy there that used to be part of the, we'd call it in the US, the Hells Angels. I don't know if you're familiar with that, a motorcycle gang.

It had a different name in Canada. But it's a chapter affiliate of the Hells Angels. Now, I didn't believe these guys could be saved.

I said, there's just no way in my heart. There's no way this guy could be a Christian, no way. If you knew the initiation rites, they have to go through, the filth, the violence.

And I had had a really bad experience with the Hells Angels as a cop. And I said, there's just no way any of these guys could be a Christian. But nevertheless, I decided to accompany him because the halfway house was a whole lot better than the prison.

And we went to this halfway house. And the director of the halfway house said, would you like to stay? And we're going to have a service tonight. Would you like to stay and testify? They asked me to testify.

And I thought, well, it's the lesser of two evils, I guess, to stay here or go to the jail. Really, I have to be honest. That's the only reason I stayed there.

And the service broke out. And I'd never seen worship like that. I mean, these guys were worshipping.

I mean, their hands are in the air. There's tears coming down some of their faces. They're giving glory to God.

And I'm just kind of really tight. I can't really worship like that. And when the service was over, a bunch of these guys gathered around.

And they said, hey, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? And I said, well, you know, when I got saved, the Holy Spirit was given to me, I guess. And they said, but are you filled with the Holy Spirit? And I said, would you like us to pray for you? And I said, no. And I'm thinking inside, what's wrong with you, man? You've been crying out to God for this kind of freedom.

What's holding you back from this kind of freedom? So they said, would you like us to pray for you? You've got to understand, these are all ex-cons. And I'm a cop. I've got a gun on me.

And these are all ex-cons. And they said, would you like us to pray for you? We're going to lay hands on you and pray for you. And finally, I said, OK, all right, pray for me.

And then two guys went around behind me. And I said, get away from me. Don't stand there.

Said, I don't like people behind me. They said, well, we think we should stand. I said, you don't need to stand behind me.

So they said, all right, have it your way. So I raised my hands, and they began to pray. And they were all praying in tongues.

I didn't know what it was, but it sure sounded good. And they were all praying. And then the next thing I know, I am flat out on a hardwood floor.

Now, I hit that floor hard, but I didn't feel it. I didn't feel a thing. And I am speaking in another tongue, in another language.

The glory of God. It's odd, because I'm a cop. I'm on duty, and I'm on the floor, and I'm speaking in tongues.

How do you explain this? And in my mind, I was thinking, what if the chief finds out about this? I mean, I'm in a halfway house, laying on the floor, speaking in a language I don't know, with a bunch of ex-cons gathered around me. And this happened to me through their putting their hands on me. They're going to lock me up.

I really felt they were going to lock me up if they ever find out about this. But I went home, and all the way home, I'm praying in tongues. And I'm thinking as I'm driving home, oh, this can't be real.

This didn't happen to me tonight. And so, OK, it's not going to happen. I made it all up.

It's not going to happen. And I opened my mouth, and a flood, just a flood of another language came out of me. Joy of Christ is all over me.

I came home. Now, we're in a Baptist church. You have to understand.

And I came home. I opened the door, and I said, hey, Teresa, listen to this. And I started to speak in tongues.

And then I ran out, and I ran. We had a farm, a sheep farm at that time as a hobby. And I ran out through the fields, and I was shouting and dancing and leaping and glorifying God.

And my wife was at home saying, my husband has lost his mind. She really did. She could tell you she thought I had gone crazy.

And so the following week, I said, listen, I've got to take you to the place I was. And you've got to get filled with the Holy Spirit like I would. And of course, it had to happen the same way.

And so we're driving into town. And I have, Teresa, she could tell it better than me. She said it was such a scary moment.

She said, my husband's got one hand on the wheel. He's got the other one in the air, and his eyes are closed. He's driving the car, and he's speaking in tongues.

I don't recommend that. I don't recommend that. And so finally, I'm just so filled with God.

I led 21 people to Christ in the first week. Folks, I just couldn't stop speaking about Jesus Christ. Haven't since.

Couldn't stop. It's just like a torrent. If any man believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

There's a flowing that's supposed to come from the believer. And it's not us. It's him.

What's required of us is to let him be God within us, to let God do what God wants to do. And so we're driving in, and I put my hand over on top of her head. And I said, oh, Jesus, this is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone.

God, what you did for me, do for her. And the next thing I know, she's melting down off the seat of the car, underneath the dash. It was amazing what happened that night.

Filled with the Holy Spirit when we're on the way to get filled with the Holy Spirit, when she gets filled with the Holy Spirit. The innocency of those days. And may I encourage those that are older Christians that you never lose the simplicity of Christ.

Never lose the joy of that experience of knowing God. Never get stuffy and old and religious and dead. Don't let it come into your life.

Paul said to Timothy, stir up that gift that is within you. Whatever you have to do to stir it up. If you have to get out to some pyramids, you gotta go with a bunch of young Christians out and evangelize on the street again.

Whatever you have to do, just do it. Just don't let it grow old. Just like your marriage, don't let your marriage go stale.

Go out and buy some flowers. Get some chocolates. Go out to dinner once in a while.

Yeah, you give, give me an old elbow there. You're looking for a word, you got it, eh? Don't feel bad. If I was over there, I would've got it too.

This is a physician heal thyself moment in my life right now. It has been miraculous. Then I came home and this will be the last part of really what I want to share, I guess.

Felt one of those panic attacks coming again. That hell on earth experience. And then I had been reading the Bible where Paul said that we are forgiven, empowered, and in Christ predetermined, predestined, it says in the King James, to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

And Paul makes a phenomenal statement. He says, if these things be true, if God be for us, who can be against us? And I was reading that that day when this darkness tried to get a hold of my life again. And I went downstairs into the living room of my house at midnight.

And up to that point, years before, it used to be pills and alcohol and exercise. Be the three things that would be part of my life to control these things. But that night, I knew I didn't have to live that way anymore.

And I prayed out loud. I said, Satan, you throw at me everything you've got. And I said, if God lets you kill me, that's because he allows it.

And if he does, I'm going to heaven. So it's win-win for me. But I'm not living like this anymore.

You throw at me everything you've got, but I throw at you what I now have. And I said, in the name of Jesus Christ, I resist you. And that's all I said.

And as God is my witness, a fire of God touched me from the top of my head to the soles of my feet. And I was immediately set free from nine years of hell. That's got to be 35 years ago.

I have traveled a good part of the world. I've preached in many, many places. I've preached to large crowds.

I've preached in small rooms. The Lord fills our hearts with his love. And the Bible says a perfect love casts out fear.

If I love you, then I will not be afraid to stand and let God tell you he loves you tonight. It's been an incredible journey. We have gone through the fire.

We have gone through the flood and literally have gone through the fire. We lost our house one time to fire. We had a young son burnt quite badly in the fire.

We've gone through the fire. We've gone through the flood. There've been trials, tribulations, and difficulties along the way.

But I can say tonight with honesty that the relationship that God has given us with himself through Jesus Christ has only gotten sweeter as the years go by. We grow in the grace and knowledge of God. We're given faith to believe for the impossible.

We've seen God move in the miraculous. I know what God can do. And my life is no more than just a testimony of him.

There's no how-to. I can't tell you to take a course or read a book or do anything that will help you in the journey. I can tell you to trust him.

And as he opens the door, just say, just go through it. Don't ask questions, just go through the doors that God opens for you. Go through humbly.

He requires humility for Christian growth. Be willing to be bendable and change, to be challenged. Don't see any person as insignificant to God.

Every person you will encounter in life, Jesus died for that person. There's no such thing as an insignificant person in this world. Whether they're lying in their vomit or they're a multimillionaire, they're both equally precious to God.

Whether they're old and wise or young with no knowledge, God loves them. It's been such a miraculous journey for me. There's so many things I could tell you, so many things that God has done, so many doors we've gone through.

So many times, opportunities to talk about actual miracles that I have seen. But the greatest miracle of all is the transformed life, hope, joy, victory, strength. The church is supposed to be a witness of this goodness of God in the world.

We're not called to bring just a theory about God, as wonderful as those things might be. We're called to be living witnesses. You shall be living witnesses of me.

We're called to be a living testimony of the fact that God is alive, that Christ has risen from the dead. My marriage is stronger than it's ever been. As Teresa and I grow older together, it's amazing how much we now love each other.

And she knows, I'm not saying that for the audience. I've said it to her the other night. I mean, she knows this is true.

I would never stand here and be a fraud. There'd be no point to it. See, my sons develop such good character.

My daughter works with us and she heads up the medical missions teams that go into various parts for destitute children throughout the world. My son-in-law is in charge of a program that feeds 5,300 kids every day. See the blessing of the Lord all over my home.

Everywhere I look, I just see the blessing of God. Now we've lost two homes, but the blessing is not about physical homes. The blessing is about the people inside those homes.

I just see the blessing of God everywhere. I've seen God do the miraculous. My parents, my family more or less rejected me.

When I didn't do what my father thought I should do or be, he more or less stopped speaking to me civilly. But I prayed for him for 26 years and God showed me in the word one commandment, honor your father, which is the first commandment with promise that it may go well with you and you may live long on the face of the earth. And so by faith, I honored him when it was not easy.

And when he would say something sharp and critical and hard, I would answer with kindness as a son who honored his father. And finally, when he got sick, when he got cancer a few years ago, I was the only one he would let touch him of all the family. He smelled so bad, you couldn't get the smell off your hands after touching him.

You could wash them for two days and they would still smell. It was a certain kind of a cancer that was just, I would take him out of bed and I would sit him in front of the toilet and I would clean his body as it needed to be cleaned. He would watch me with my hands filled with ozone excrement on them.

I refused to wear a mask because he was my father. I refused to put gloves on my hands. Laid him down in bed and said, dad, I wanna tell you one more time what it means to be a Christian.

And it's the first time in his life he listened. I only spoke for three minutes. You never overplayed your hand with this man.

He was Irish. And then I went back to New York and the Holy Spirit a week later said, go now and see your father. And so I flew back immediately on a Monday morning and I walked right into his hospital room.

He's sitting beside the door and I said, dad, have you been praying? He said, I've been praying all week. I said, are you ready to pray with me now? He said, if you'd like to, I'd like to do that. And so I led him in a sinner's prayer from Genesis to Revelation.

I wanted to make sure this thing is right. I'm a dirty, rotten, filthy sinner. I can't save myself.

And he repeated every word. My brother, who was a drug addict, backed up into the wall in the hospital, slid down the wall crying, went to bed and didn't get up for three days. He was so shocked to hear my father pray those words.

He is now a believer and a follower of Jesus Christ as well. I led my father to Christ, put him back in bed, and we had the most wonderful conversation. That a father and son could ever have.

It was the first time he ever told me he loved me. The last words he spoke to me is, when you get to heaven, I'll be there. I was so excited that he had come to Christ.

This is about three, four Christmases ago. I walked out of the hospital, ran down the street to my car. You would have thought I lost my mind, if you knew me.

I was shouting and dancing and crying and clapping. And all of the Christmas decorations were out. And it was like, God, this is what it's all about.

This is what life is about. This is what your power is all about. This is what it's about.

It's all about people. It's about souls. It's about believing in for the impossible.

It's about miracles that only God can do. I was so excited to go back and I was gonna see him that night. We'd had an hour of fellowship.

We'd talked about heaven. We'd talked about the forgiveness of sin. We'd talked about how it feels to be born again.

And I was gonna go back. And when I went back that night, he had slipped into a coma, which he never came out of and was gone. And when he had his funeral, my sister, who hadn't spoken to me for 20 years, we went to arrange the funeral.

I didn't really care what they did. I didn't care if they did a smoke and a light show. It didn't matter to me at all.

He's in heaven and I knew it. And my sister told the church authorities and people, my brother will be speaking at my father's funeral. It was amazing.

I was stunned. And in a Catholic church, I got to get up and give the sermon and tell the people, I don't have to think. I don't have to hope.

I don't have to wonder. I know my father. And it was my whole family was there, my aunts and uncles and cousins.

I had once prayed, God help me. Is there ever a way I can reach these people? They were all there. And I told them about the blood of Jesus Christ, what God had done for my father, how he had received him in the last hour, conscious hour of his life.

There's so many stories I could tell you like that. This is a miracle working God. This is an awesome relationship with God.

I hope I live long enough to just go many other places and tell many more people just really what Jesus Christ has done. Very real, very practical, but very supernatural. Not spooky and not stupid, just very normal.

Just very, very normal, but very attractive. That's what Jesus was like. Very normal, he would sit at a table and the Pharisees would accuse him of drinking and eating with sinners, but very attractive to sinners.

That's what the Lord is going to do in Ireland. I would hope tonight that you would be willing to take whatever step God is calling you to take. If you've lost heart, you'd be willing to believe again.

You have to start believing for the impossible. That's where your faith will be stretched and encouraged. Start believing again, wherever you've lost heart.

And usually the first place we lose heart is about ourselves. We somehow just don't believe that God could ever use us. But remember I said the first night, to believe that is to deny that God is God.

He can use me, he can use you. He can give us joy again. He can raise us out of the ashes.

He can give us his life. He can make us into whatever he chooses to make us into. He's God.

You know we're the only thing in creation that has the power to say no to God? God tells the sun to rise. Does the sun say no? God tells the geese to go south. You don't hear half of them saying no.

We've had a committee meeting and decided to do it another way. We're the only thing in God's creation that can say no. Everything just obeys him and moves in divine order.

The only one who messes the order is you and me, humanity. And if we get back to the place of saying I will not resist God, but whatever God is asking of me, that's what I will do. It starts with forgiveness.

It starts with the simple things. Like you don't preach to millions of people without going through the first things first. There's forgiveness of letting people go any grievance or debt that you think that they owe you.

Let it go. Because all you're doing, you know people who don't forgive, I was saying to Jerry today, people who refuse to forgive are like a robber who at midnight goes out with his bag over his shoulder to steal and in the confusion of darkness robs his own house. And when we refuse to forgive, we rob our own house.

We're not hurting anybody else, we're hurting ourselves. And restitution is another thing. Now I could start telling you, when after I got saved, the Lord called me to go back to a former Hells Angel member that I had gotten into a fist fight with outside a local bar and ask his forgiveness.

I mean, if I didn't know it was God, I think it was insane to do that. To make restitution for things I had done. That's part of the gospel, where it's possible to make past wrongs right.

Now it's not always possible. If you rob like 16 banks here tonight, don't feel like you gotta go back and, you know, unless you have the money, you know. You know what I'm talking about.

You do the first things first. If you're part of a local church fellowship, then instead of wanting to stand up and prophesy every second Sunday, how about just being a doorman? How about cleaning the carpets

after the meeting is over? I used to do that. How about stacking the chairs? How about saying, pastor, is there anything I can do for you? Do the first things.

Be faithful in those things. And it's the Lord who gives the increase. It's the Lord who calls.

And I could tell you how it all happened, but we don't have time tonight. I think I've exhausted what I need to say. But it's been a miraculous journey.

He called me to preach. A man who used to be afraid of people. I simply stepped out in faith.

Those first meetings, when they'd be introducing me and I'd be throwing up in the bathroom, I'd be even worse than that. I'd be so sick inside, but I would step out by faith. And the moment I'd open my mouth, the anointing of God would come.

You just have to do it by faith and trust God. And he works with our frailty. Our Lord Jesus Christ, this whole week has been about you.

It's been about glorifying you. It's been about understanding that your banner over us is love. Thank you for being kind to our weaknesses.

Thank you for not despising us when we fail. Thank you, Lord, for giving us the understanding that you really are glorified when the weakest vessels stand up and talk about you. Would you help us? Would you help us, Lord Jesus, where we need you? Would you give us the strength that we need? Would you help us to go that extra mile now and not draw back? Would you help us to honor you in this generation? Help us to love people.

Help us to forgive those that have wronged us. Help us, Jesus, to be kind. Help us, Lord God, in all of these things.

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