

The Theological Error of 'Whathowwhen'

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty and timing, rather than falling into the error of expecting Him to work in a certain way or on a certain timeline.

Duration: 38:14

Scripture: Luke 24:13

Topics: "Trust In God", "Surrender To Will"

Description

This sermon delves into the theological error of 'What Howland,' focusing on the danger of discouragement when our expectations of God's plans do not align with reality. Through the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the message emphasizes the need to trust God's timing and purposes, even in the face of darkness and confusion. It highlights the unselfish nature of the kingdom of God, calling believers to be willing to be broken for the sake of others and to find peace in surrendering to God's will.

Transcript

I have an unusual title this morning. I want to talk to you about the theological error of what Howland You ever heard of what Howland? Now you're going to hear about it this morning the theological error of what Howland Luke chapter 24 Beginning at verse 13 now father. I thank you God with all of my heart For your presence here in the sanctuary, I Thank you for your Holy Spirit You Holy Spirit are the comforter the guide The one who opens this book to our hearts and our minds and makes it a living reality a strength inside of each of us You are the one who quickens us not only to speak the word but to hear it And so God I thank you Lord that you are preparing us For whatever awaits us Just around the corner You are helping us Lord to have a right perspective From the Word of God and so Lord, I thank you for this with all of my heart today God override the frailty of this human vessel override the frailty of our hearts and our ears Give me the power to speak and give us the power to hear And Lord, we thank you for it in Jesus name The theological error of what Howland now this message is actually about discouragement the Bible tells us that in the last days because iniquity shall abound the love of many will grow cold and Who can deny but that iniquity is abounding today? The way people speak the way society is spiraling down Into really a deeper darkness almost every day It can become easy to grow cold to every form of love in particular the love of the lost the love of the work of God the love of truth everything can begin to spiral down into discouragement Some are discouraged today And for those who are not discouraged today, I'm going to try to build Some kind of theology from the Word of God into your heart to protect you from the

discouragement that awaits for you around the corner tomorrow all of us are prone to discouragement and That's what this message is about Luke chapter 24 beginning at verse 13 now behold Two of them were traveling the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem And they talked together of all these things which had happened and so it was while they conversed and reasoned That Jesus himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were restrained So that they did not know him In other words they were so engrossed in their own reasoning in their own assessment of what had just taken place with the recent crucifixion of Jesus Christ That they could not see nor understand when the Lord himself began to walk with them And he said to them what kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad? Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to him.

Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem and Have not known these things which have happened there in these days And he said to them what things? So they said to him the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth Who was a prophet mighty indeed and word before God and all the people and how the chief priests and our rulers? Delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him But we were hoping the original King James says we had hoped that it was he who was going to redeem Israel Indeed beside all this today is the third day since these things happened Things were spiraling down in a way that they had never thought they would What really was a victory They saw as a defeat because they had fallen into the theological error of what Howan the prophet Habakkuk in Seeing Babylon sent of God to judge that which was left of the nation of Israel Looking at this in comic this coming battle looking at the the futility of Trying to defend itself at this particular moment of history. He utters these words in chapter 1 verse 4 therefore the law is powerless and Justice never goes forth for the wicked surround the righteous and therefore perverse judgment proceeds And what this prophet was saying is this is not the way things should be going Aren't we supposed to be protected by the law and Isn't the justice of God supposed to surround us and protect us from the wicked why then is the wicked surrounding the righteous? And is this not a perversion of the promises or the judgments that we thought belong to us because of God Now these men on the road to Emmaus were less than one Generation away from their society being totally removed from its familiar place You and I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring God knows God knows what has to happen God knows what he has to do. God knows where the place of protection safety and victory really is at the time when the Romans in AD 70 came in and Destroyed the temple destroyed the city of Jerusalem and took all of the people that were left in Israel into exile Most of the Christians according to Christianity today were already out of town they had already been driven out of Jerusalem by persecution as As much as decades earlier and how many people would have thought they were defeated how many left? Jerusalem discouraged how many thought that this is not the way I thought things should be not realizing that a deeper plan Than the one that they had Imagined was unfolding and that of course is the dilemma that you and I fall into We think we know what God is about to do.

We think we have the complete picture of the way it ought to unfold And I want those of you who are being kicked out of town Right now you find yourself because of Christ you're being you're being kicked out on your job in a sense You're being marginalized or pushed to the side because you hold to a biblical Worldview you're being Excluded even from your family gatherings are happening. You're not invited and if you are you're finding it's a hostile environment and you're battling discouragement Because of it. I want you to strongly consider what we're going to talk about today Discouragement by definition means to lose courage on your forward journey It's like somebody that's crossing a deep ravine on a narrow wooden footbridge that begins to fall apart right before your eyes You thought you knew where you were going You thought you fully understood the path before you and you thought that it was going to bring you to a

desired end But now it's just disappearing before you and quite often it happens because the pathway that we have crafted for ourselves and before our eyes is partly truth and partly fiction Let me explain The people on the road to Emmaus said we we were hoping We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel in other words, we crafted a view how everything before us concerning God was going to play out We knew What was going to happen? But when it didn't happen the way we thought it was going to happen.

We lost both Courage and we lost heart In the gospel of Matthew chapter 20 verses 20 to 22 The mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons kneeling down and asking something from a very very spiritual moment And he said to her what do you wish and she said grant that these two sons of mine may set One on your right hand and the other on your left in your kingdom now they have been she has they have most people have an impression that the kingdom of God is as Going to come immediately and their viewpoint of what that kingdom is going to look like Now Jesus answered and said you do not know what you ask Are you able to drink the cup that i'm about to drink and be baptized with the baptism? I'm baptized with and they said to him we are able Well, how do you think they saw that they saw themselves sitting at the right hand and the left hand of Jesus As kings ruling and reigning with him servants coming up to them with a beautiful cup Of nice red wine or juice or whatever it was that they are you able to drink the cup? Yes, we are we can stay humble we can lead we can rule we can reign we can they have no idea That he was talking about suffering And rejection and going through a moment of darkness where all seems to be lost on the way to what was the greatest victory of all time Peter puts his sword in his belt at the last supper Jesus said anybody have a sword pick a sword up because it's written He shall be numbered among the transgressors And he took his sword and we know from the garden of gethsemane when judas and the betrayers came He was ready to fight. He went for the jugular of the high priest servant high priest servant ducked He cut his ear off. I'm convinced.

That's the way it happened But he already had the ticker tape victory parade down the Broadway of Jerusalem already going in his mind Yes, it was me and Jesus as the papers begin to fall as the victory was won. Yes, I fought Jesus fought we won the victory the kingdom has come the Roman Empire has been the dominance of Rome over our society has been destroyed There had to be others Who thought in their heart Jesus is going to deliver us and establish His kingdom and what their view of that kingdom Was he's going to do it now John chapter 18 verse 16 when they came again into gethsemane to captivate Christ They he said to them who are you looking for? They said we're looking for Jesus Of Nazareth and he said to them I am he And when he said those words they all drew back and fell to the ground There had to be people that are thinking aha. This is the moment Obviously, he has the power in his voice to raise the dead.

He has the power to calm the seas He has the power to stop the wind. He's got the power to heal a centurion servant in another town I mean nothing can stop his voice And as soon as he says I am he all of those who are sent to capture him Literally back up and fall to the ground. It's it's a display of his power And there had to be people there thinking this is the moment.

This is what we've waited to see This is the kingdom of God has come James and John probably thought wow, we are really close now to sitting at the right in the left hand of Christ Only to see him led away captivated and themselves fleeing discouraged And now here's their error They took three separate moments That come to all of us in the kingdom of God and they combined them into one They knew first of all What Christ came to do they knew it they understood it. He was the Messiah He stood in the synagogue in our bibles Luke chapter 4 verse 18 And he declared himself to be the fulfillment of the promise that God

had made to his people and so Isaiah chapter 61. Let me just read it to you beginning at verse 1 the spirit of the lord god is upon me Because he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted To proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound To proclaim the acceptable year of the lord in the day of vengeance of our god to comfort all who mourn To console those who mourn in zion and give them beauty for ashes the oil of joy for mourning the garment of praise for the spirit Of heaviness that they might be called trees of righteousness the planting of the lord that he might be glorified And they shall rebuild the old ruins They shall raise up the former desolations.

They shall repair the ruined cities the desolations of many generations strangers shall stand and feed your flocks And the sons of the foreigners shall be your plowmen and your vine dressers But you shall be named the priests of the lord. They shall call you servants of our god You shall eat the riches of the gentiles and in their glory you shall boast Instead of your shame you shall have double honor and instead of confusion. They shall rejoice in their portion Therefore in their land, they shall possess double and everlasting joy shall be theirs I guess you can't blame them really They knew their messiah had come they knew what he had come for most of them understood the scriptures Jesus himself had identified himself as being the one whom was sent of god to fulfill this in their ears And when you look at it in its full context, it meant it would appear at least That it was offering immediate victory Immediate ruling and reigning immediate bowing down in the sense of the gentile nations to the truth of who god is through jesus christ and so knowing What he came to do? They made a mistake and they do what we do they formulated in their own minds how it needed to be done and when Jesus needed to do it Bottom line, they took three separate moments and combined them into one word What how it? One word But it was three moments in history You know, there are people here today that You're lonely and you know That christ came to meet the needs of your heart, you know that he came to heal your broken hearted He he came to be everything to you that you need And you're single You're in your middle to late 30s You're starting to panic And you know that jesus came to meet the needs you know that if you pray to remove this mountain and do not Doubt that you're going to have whatsoever You say you know that if you love god and you're asking for the right reasons You're going back right into the garden of eden saying lord.

You saw that adam was lonely You saw there wasn't a good thing You made a wife for him And you had him all to yourself, but you knew the need in his heart So I see in scriptures who I see what you came to do And perhaps he will say yes to you. Yes, you're that person is going to come into your life that you long for To share life with to be your life partner to be your husband to be your wife But the problem with all of humanity is we know what god came to do But we start to tell him how he's going to do it and when he's going to do it And may I say you even add the word who into there what who how when? You craft this Picture that you're in this and I know i'm speaking to people that have done this this morning You're worshipping and you look over just on this side and there she is there he is wherever your case is and And they look over at you and the electricity just shoots right across the sanctuary one side to the other God, I knew it god. I knew it God, I knew it god.

I knew it. There was a young man who felt that way one time and He he just he knew he knew this was the girl. He just knew it in his heart Oh god, thank you.

Thank you for meeting the need of my heart so he he wangled his way through the crowd and he met her at the The door on the way out and he goes to speak to her. She doesn't speak a word of english. She's not from america visiting What how and there's a theological error It's a theological error that these people of that time made they knew what he had come to do But then they surmised they knew how he was going

to do it and when it was going to happen And you see just like the men on the road to emmaus when it doesn't happen our way and on our timetable we walk away discouraged That's the theological error of what how and? The promises of god are yea and amen the promises of god are true Everything he said he's going to do for us.

He's going to do but not on our timetable And not the way we think it should be done Everything that is promised Will happen but there might be a dark night of the soul between here and that time There might be a season When the christians are kicked out of town As they were in jerusalem god preparing to preserve them and actually most writers agree that Having the christians kicked out of jerusalem which they thought they thought that was where they Came it is where the kingdom of god is going to center where he's going to rule and reign from So what sense would it make to their minds to be kicked out of the very place that god says is going to be the center Of where he's going to rule and he's going to reign But thank god with all my heart today I really do That because they were kicked out of jerusalem The gospel went to the gentiles Thank god for that with all of our hearts Thank god for mercy Thank god today that if you and I are confused if we're discouraged if things just didn't work out The way we thought they would We knew what jesus had come to do But we supposed we knew how He was going to do it and when it was going to happen And because it didn't work out the way we thought we sit here discouraged In the midst of all of our discouragement though. Jesus still comes and says I will never leave you Or forsake you even if you don't recognize me anymore Even if you really can't hear my voice when i'm walking beside you and talking to you I will not fail you. I will not forsake you You have not been triumphed over the devil has won.

Nothing. There's no victory for him whatsoever in this The plan of god in your life is still unfolding exactly as it was intended to As god intended to unfold that plan It's unfolding not the way you or I think it should be but the plan that he decreed for us As he placed us in his body for his reasons and for his purposes He walks besides us even if we don't recognize him. He opens our hearts and our minds to those things As he's doing this morning that we may not Have considered yet Things that we've been unwilling to so many people sit in discouragement because it's not god's plan For your life that has failed to unfold.

It's your plan for your life That has failed to unfold god's plan is still going forward exactly as it was destined to do nothing has changed He is bringing you he is bringing me to a desired end Where our lives will be a standing testimony of praise and glory to who he is To what he does to the incredible depths of his mercy He could easily have just gone to he had a lot of people left in the upper room he had people in jerusalem He had a lot of seekers still there. Why would he leave all of that and first go after people who are walking away? From the place of promise walking away in discouragement. It's simply because he said I will never leave you or forsake you do Understand that Even when you're discouraged even if you're going home and actually accusing him of failing you Yet, he will not leave you.

He will not forsake you. He will walk with you He will appear to you and begin to speak And then in the scriptures In luke 24 again Verse 27 he says i'm beginning at moises and all the prophets He expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself Then they drew near to the village where they were going and he indicated he would have gone farther in other words The lord says i'm not going to force you to understand these things I'm, not going to force you into a place of trust When everything seems to be dark and going wrong and when sadness and discouragement Are threatening the very borders of your heart and your walk with me i'm not going to push myself on you But if you desire it, I will open to you the scriptures and show you things that you may not have considered yet Think about it these disciples Most of them walked with him for three years and when you go through the red letter in your bible You realize

there was nothing hidden from them at all. He said it plainly to them He told them what was going to happen.

He he told them he was going to be betrayed Given into the hands of sinners. He told him he was going to be mocked He told him he was going to be crucified and he told them it was going to raise From the day be raised from the dead on the third day yet Almost nobody was able to hear it because too many people were locked into the theological error of knowing how the kingdom of god was supposed to play out and When it was all supposed to happen in their lives And even today What if what if what if god is preparing us for a very hard time? In this city, can we hear it? Are we willing to hear it? Are we willing today to let the lord begin to speak to our hearts and unlock the scriptures and show us that my ways are Not your ways and my plans are not your plans And what you think is a defeat is a victory What you think is a loss is gain what you think is hopeless is hope beyond reason They drew near to the village they indicated it would have gone farther but they constrained him saying abide with us in other words Because later on you'll see their hearts were beginning to burn inside that there was something in them Even though it was so hard to hear and so hard to see because none of us really want to suffer None of us really want to be rejected none of us really want to be fully Identified with the cross of jesus christ and all that could mean in this generation But something in their heart was saying this is right This is right God is not called to be my servant. I am called to be a servant of the most high god Christ didn't come To add a spiritual dimension to my agenda He came to bring me out of my agenda and bring me into a place where I would say If it be possible, I would rather not do things this way Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done The servant is not above his lord.

Jesus said If they have called me The things that they're going to call me and will in the future that you will not escape it either as the people of god and they They constrained him saying abide with us Because it's getting dark And the day is coming to an end and that has got to be the cry of your heart and the cry of my heart now in this generation God Maybe I got it all wrong But i'm asking that something is stirring and cutting the edges of my heart something's burning inside of me lord and and i'm asking you because It's getting dark Society is getting darker The day is coming to an end And lord, I need you I need your strength and i'm now willing to hear what you want to speak to me I'm willing to do it your way and not mine. I'm willing to follow your plan and not mine I'm willing to follow your leading and not the leading of my own heart I want the truth of scripture not something that just pacifies me and paints this lily paved pathway of ease all the way into eternity God, I want the truth because I recognize it's only the truth that's going to set me free and only the truth Will craft before me a path that will get me through With life And the scripture says now it came to pass as he sat at the table with them That he took bread and blessed it and broke it And gave it to them and then their eyes were opened and they knew him and he vanished from their sight There's a sudden understanding That when he says I chose them i've been given for you As a testimony I was broken so that you might be made whole And as I was given for you now i've given you For the sake of others as a testimony of how god is willing to be given for all people So that they might be forgiven and heaven can become their eternal home You will rule and reign one day james and john You did win the victory peter, even though you don't understand That the victory was really yours I do have all power and all authority and I could have pushed them all to the ground and claimed the kingdom But if I had claimed the kingdom at that time myriads countless myriads of people including people in the year 2017 At time square church in new york city would have had no hope Would have been born without hope the door would have already been closed. There would have been no opportunity for them To be forgiven their sin and given the promise of an eternity in heaven with god so for their sakes I'm leaving you on the earth For their sakes i'm going to allow you to be broken so that they might be made whole for their sakes

I'm leaving you in this darkened place.

I'm leaving you in these places of confusion and difficulty I'm leaving you in the midst of a society that is turning against the testimony of god every day I'm leaving you there as a testimony Of who I am and what I am willing to do Then their eyes were open then they began to see it's about a higher purpose Than living to see our own views fulfilled The kingdom of god is about more than that God help this nation for the gospel.

We have allowed to be preached here It has brought such weakness into the house of god and such weakness into the testimony of god It's an incredible privilege to be broken for the sake of others It's an incredible privilege to have our will Die and be subjected to the will of god that others might find christ as lord and savior That is the value system of heaven So That's when our eyes are opened again, that's when we have the power to go back now folks They were not going back into what in the natural looked like a place of victory They were going back into a society that had just crucified christ and were in no mood to endure his followers But they were heading back into that society Understanding that everything will one day be ours though for a season we live so that it can belong to others Also, the kingdom of god is the most unselfish kingdom in the universe The kingdom of god is where we live for the benefit of others We live for the sake of those who don't yet know that they can be forgiven That is the kingdom of god And so they rose up that very hour and returned to jerusalem and they found the eleven And those who were with them gathered together Saying the lord is risen indeed and has appeared to simon And as they told about the things that had happened on the road and how he was known To them in the breaking of bread and as they said these things jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said to them Peace you see discouragement disappears when I begin to understand That there's something deeper to my life than just being happy the way I see it there's a deeper purpose to my life Than just ruling and reigning and being comfortable and being served and all this other stuff That was part of the promise and it will come one day But there's a deeper purpose now on the earth and As they begin to share about how They came to this understanding jesus appears in the room through their testimony And says peace It's such a beautiful picture People who were formerly discouraged now understanding You were given for me and you call me to be given for others And as they share we've seen him And when he broke bread our eyes were opened and we began to understand A little more about his kingdom and his purpose and as they began to share A people who now understood at least marginally anyway that they were called to be given for other people jesus appears Oh god Oh god Oh god You see we bear this treasure of christ in earthen vessels and as we allow ourselves to be Yielded for his purpose.

We begin to tell others about the depth of his love He appears And he says peace He appears in our testimony appears through our words.

He appears through the intonations of our voice. He appears Because we understand That it's all about the people we are talking to Suddenly he starts speaking peace to troubled hearts all around us God would you help us To escape our own theological error Would you help us lord as a church age in america that has essentially Circumvented almost the entire understanding of what we've spoken about this morning Would you help us to escape The light and treacherous theology That is going to bring so many of god's people into discouragement in the days ahead When things just don't work out The way they were told they should Have mercy lord on people who are sitting on the roadside in houston in puerto rico Who may have sat in the houses of god where they were? Taught this theology that trouble is not part of the christian life That we simply rule and reign from the day that we receive christ as savior Help them not to be discouraged or bitter Open their eyes Would you help these believers in christ to reach out to others

around them so that you may appear through their testimony Would you help us lord in the days just ahead of us? If violence should break out in our cities If our society should spiral down to a level of depravity, we never believed was possible Would you help us to be those agents? of being given for you to the point Where you appear to the people we are speaking to And so father I thank you with all my heart I thank you lord that you have raised this church for 30 years You have been with us your presence has been in the sanctuary Your grace has carried us your truth has enabled us You've taken us through fire through flood through trial through difficulty And you've prepared us for this moment in history And lord, I thank you for it god with all my heart Help me help us lord Never to be discouraged in the days ahead And we thank you in jesus name I'd like to give an altar call this morning For those who came in here discouraged And just want to say in your heart, I just want to give it to god I want to give it all to god i'm going to trust him I'm going to trust i'd like to sing that song greg. I will trust in god I'm just going to choose to trust in god no matter what happens And i'm going to believe that what looks like defeat is actually victory And i'm going to ask jesus to abide with me and speak to me and show me where true christian strength is found If that's your heart I'm going to ask you just as we stand to get out of your seat in the balcony go either exit and the annex you Could step between the screens And just come and join me join me And say god Give me a right understanding so that I will not be discouraged in the days ahead Let's stand together.

Please if we can and slip out just come wherever you are just come Come Stretch your hands out, please towards me those that have come to the altar today and others who want to Father, I just thank you god Thank you lord You are indeed the glory and the lifter of my head You are the one I can run to lord when every other refuge has failed Lord your light when all I can see is darkness your joy when all I have is a hopelessness in my heart But oh god, I will not trade your promises for any confusion for any of this thing of this world father, I thank you lord for These men and women lord and we we just we banish that spirit of discouragement from every heart Lord, you're in total control And one day one day all of us will appear before the throne of god How wonderful that day will be we can only sing about it Now we can only speculate will I dance will I cry will I laugh? But god, we will see finally how faithful you have been You've not failed us. You've not forsaken us. You didn't abandon any one Any one of your children? And maybe just maybe maybe just maybe you left an ache in our hearts so that we would still seek you god You you know, you know lord what would take us away from me, you know god, you know What would happen and so we have to trust lord and I pray for that deepening trust in every heart lord a deepening trust That we're not living on the short end of the spiritual stick We have the fullness of god's love and affection We are the very center of the eye of god Father, thank you lord.

Thank you god I pray lord jesus christ for my brothers my sister lord that out of out of these ashes you would bring forth beauty Beauty Out of this darkened place you'd bring forth a song god a song That will minister grace to the hearers a testimony That will cause you to appear when people are struggling and confused Father, I thank you God, thank you. God. Thank you God, thank you.

Help us to put away help everyone to put away our our ideas What we think the future should look like and to embrace your plan Father, thank you. God. Thank you lord.

Thank you. Jesus. Thank you.

Jesus. Thank you lord God almighty you will be faithful Thank you lord. Thank you god Praise you.

Praise you jesus. Thank you lord. Thank you god Thank you

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