

# Thoughts on Faith and Prayer (Video)

by Carter Conlon

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*This sermon emphasizes the difference between merely coming to Christ and truly going with Christ, challenging believers to move beyond seeking personal benefits to being willing to be given for the sake of others. It highlights the need for a genuine spiritual awakening, a deeper commitment to following Jesus, and a willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit into sacrificial living for the kingdom of God.*

**Scripture:** John 6:53, John 6:63, John 6:66, Matthew 9:37, Matthew 16:24, Acts 1:8, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:3, 1 John 3:16

**Topics:** "True Discipleship", "Sacrificial Living"

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## Description

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## Transcript

of the people that are volunteering to be part of this time of prayer tonight. I have one prayer request that I'd like to talk about this evening as I open this part of the prayer meeting called Thoughts on Faith and Prayer. And it's a thought that I wanna bring to you about the difference between coming to Christ and going with Christ, okay? So we're gonna draw that line between the two.

There's a lot of people come to Christ and some of those who come to Christ are willing to go with Christ. If you'll turn with me to the book of John chapter six, this is where we're gonna go tonight. We're gonna read a passage of scripture there together and I'm gonna pray before we undertake this.

Father, I thank you God for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. Lord, without your Holy Spirit, we don't understand the word of God. Without your Holy Spirit, we can't live in the word of God.

We can't go where the word of God is leading us. So Father, in Jesus' name tonight, I pray God, give me the ability to speak these words and help us as your people, as the people of God, to move in the direction, Lord, that you want us to move into. And we thank you for it in Jesus' name, amen.

Now there's one prayer request coming in from Helsinki, Finland tonight and it says pray for revival in Finland and for the congregation to step out and reach out to the needy and the desperate people around us. And I love that prayer request because one is associated with the other. You can't have a genuine

revival without the people of God stepping up and Christ beginning to move through us as his people to the human need that's all around us.

Somebody sent me this today. I wanna read it to you. It's from a missions organization that I know is credible and the leadership is not given to any exaggeration and they speak the truth.

But they sent me this. It says, a few years ago, a Western-style evangelistic crusade was held in a major city of India. At the meeting, approximately 200,000 people attended one evening.

There was provided for them some limited food and refreshments for the crowd at the back of the gathering for the end of the gathering. When the evangelist asked for the people who wanted to accept Christ to raise their hands, everyone did. All 200,000 people raised their hands to receive Jesus as savior.

Two years later, a meticulous survey was conducted in that city of all the Bible-believing churches as to how many people became solid believers from this crusade event and developed into growing disciples of Jesus and were embedded in a church congregation. It was a meticulous study that went to almost all, if not all, of the Bible-believing churches in the city and they found that out of 200,000 people that raised their hands that night, two people had joined local churches and gone into becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. I mean, if that wasn't tragic, it would be rather humorous tonight.

Of all the people that came to that particular crusade and when a crusade where it's easy to believe in Jesus, they were invited to believe in him, they were invited to come to him and they were invited to partake of dinner after the meeting was over in the back of this large stadium. And so when the invitation was given to come to Jesus, 200,000 people raised their hands. But when the invitation of the spirit of God was given to follow Jesus or to go with Jesus where he was leading, sad to say, two people were found from that entire crusade who had actually joined local churches and had gone on to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

So that really makes the point. It's easy to come to Jesus, it's more difficult to go where Jesus is leading us to go. And so quite often in the Christian context, we pray for revival, but we think that revival is just God making us feel good in our present place or present condition or present understanding of Christian life or service or scripture.

We just wanna feel good where we are, that's what we think revival is, or we wanna bring in more people, somehow we think that's also revival. But even the scripture itself, it talks about the crowds that pressed in, coming to Jesus in a sense, when they were coming for bread, you remember one time he said in the scriptures, you're only seeking me for the bread, the free bread in the sense that you got yesterday, now you're pressing in because you feel that proximity to me is gonna give you a lot of free stuff or free food in your life, things that you want to happen. And the crowds, they pressed in from every side to the point where at certain times, it was difficult for him to even move or they had to put him out into a boat, into the sea as it were, so he could speak to the people because there was such a multitude coming to Jesus.

But you and I know the story that when things got tough, when coming to Jesus meant a little more than just free bread and healing and wonderful things like that, thank God when we initially come to him, he does provide, he does heal, he does give a new heart and a new song, but there is something in the Christian life that we are called to that is beyond that. And you and I, we all know the story that when times got tough, there was only a few left in the vicinity of the Garden of Gethsemane and ultimately from the crowds of the thousands, thousands that were thronging him, the 10,000 on the hillside one day, at least

10,000 that were fed by the multiplying of the loaves and the fishes, by the time it was all said and done, there was 120 people left in an upper room. Now, I want you to really think about that.

It's easy to come to Jesus, but it's a lot more difficult to actually go with Jesus where he's leading. Now, in John chapter six, verse 53, now, Jesus is speaking to those that are following him. There's a lot of disciples at this point that are following him, but it's assumed he had about, you know, there's thousands following him, but there's about 70 intimate disciples at this point that are being taught of him.

Then Jesus said to them most assuredly, verse 53 of John six, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day for my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. So he's saying, I am going to provide something for you through my life that you will need to partake of to be my disciples.

If you're going to follow me, you're going to need a strength that is more than your own. As a matter of fact, not just a strength, you're going to need God to give you the will to actually live outside of our own comforts and live in a sense as he was about to show for the sake of others to be yielded so that others may find Christ as Lord and savior. Verse 56, he said, he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.

In other words, I'm going to provide for you a sacrifice, a banquet, and it's going to be a banquet of a victory that I'm going to win for you on a cross. It's something you don't fully understand yet, but one day you will. He said, as the living father has sent me and I live because of the father, so he who feeds on me will live because of me.

I have a life that's given to me of my father, he said, and in the same way, after I have prepared this banquet for you, you also will live and be taken out of the confines of your own thinking and your own weakness and brought into something of God. This is the bread, verse 58, which came down from heaven, not as your fathers ate manna and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.

Now these things he said in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum. Therefore, many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, this is a hard saying, who can understand it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples complained about this, he said to them, does this offend you? Does it offend you that I'm calling you to something deeper than you've considered before? Does it offend you when I tell you that you don't have the strength to do what's going to be required of you or to follow me where I'm leading you? Does it offend you that you don't have it in yourself? And he said to them in verse 62, what then if you should see the son of man ascend where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.

In other words, he said, will it make a difference to you if you see that by the spirit of God, I'm going to be raised from the dead and I'm going to be drawn back into heaven? I came from my father, I'm going to go back to my father and I'm telling you, unless you have the spirit of God in you you don't have life. And the words that I give to you, they are life and they will guide you, they will lead you, they will make you into the person that you could never ever hope to be in your own strength. They're going to give you the power to go where you can't go in your own strength and to become what you can't become with any amount of human effort.

And they're going to even produce in you a new heart and a new mind and a new spirit. Verse 64, he said, but there are some of you who do not believe. There's some, sad to say, even in our generation who just, they don't believe that Christian life is anything more than just what can I get for myself? How much bread can I get? How much healing can I get? How much freedom can I get? And the whole coming to Christ is like the crowd in India.

It's for what I can get at the end of the service. It's for what's here and what's available for me. But when there's a call to go deeper, when there's a call to be a disciple, when there's a call to be given for the sake of others or for the kingdom of God, it's so difficult for them to go beyond just coming to Jesus and going beyond to actually following where he is leading us to go.

And he said, therefore, I have said to you that no one can come to me unless it's been granted to him by my father. You know, if you're gonna pray for something tonight, pray for a heart to live for God. Pray for God's heart to be made manifest inside your earthly body.

You can't even come to God unless the father gives it to you. You and I can't understand who God is unless God opens that to our hearts. We can't even have the desire to actually live for the sake of others unless God plants it in us in the first place.

And verse 66, one of the most pathetic verses in all of the Bible. It says, from that time, many of his disciples went back and walked with him no more. They just said, this is too hard.

This is not what we signed up for. We're following you. We all have our agenda, in a sense, and you seem to be the one who can fulfill our agenda and you can give us peace and you can give us provision and you can heal us and we know the things you can do.

But now you're talking about taking us somewhere deeper than we've ever gone before. You're talking about making us into a people that are given, in a sense, for the work of God as you will be for us. And we didn't sign up for this.

And the scripture says that they just walked away. Now, I've read commentaries on it. It's assumed that about 58 of the 70 just picked up their pack sacks and they left.

You see, they were willing to come to Jesus, but they were not willing to go with Jesus. And there's so many people like that in every generation. I pray to God that you and I are not found among them in this time.

We must go where he's leading us. We must become the people that he's calling us to be. I find it strange that in all of this passage of scripture, there's no mention of even one person saying, can you explain this to me, please? Could you tell me what it is that you're actually talking about? They just assumed they knew what he meant.

And everybody kind of filtered it through their own, the filter of their own experience and maybe their own expectations. And it seemed too outlandish that they had to partake of this sacrifice that the son of God was going to provide this banquet for them to take them into a place where they couldn't go in their own strength. And they looked at it and they said, this is hard.

This is difficult. It's hard. You know, I've been speaking here, for example, to young people and saying, listen, we need you.

The kingdom of God needs you. There's so many young people listening online that you've got your life all planned. You thought at least you had it all planned.

And then suddenly God's calling you into something that's deeper than anything you ever considered for your life. Instead of going and getting, God's now talking to you about going and giving, becoming a completely different person than the person you thought you were going to be and following a different path than the one you had outlaid for your feet. And he speaks to you and says, you can't do this in your own strength.

You've got to be a partaker of the sacrifice that's going to be made for you, the banquet that's going to be made available through the cross of Jesus Christ. God's Holy Spirit will give you this new heart. God's Holy Spirit will give you this new mind and this new spirit that gives you and I the power to break out of the selfishness of our own desires and the ways we want to live and will bring us into that place where we are willing to be given for the sake of others.

That's what we teach at our Bible school. The true Christianity is living for the benefit of others. And nobody wants to go, there's a few people I suppose who are compassionate and they do a lot for people and I applaud them.

I thank God for that. But essentially speaking, almost nobody wants to go in that direction. 200,000 will raise their hands because there's a free meal of chicken and rice at the end of the service.

But two will actually become disciples of Jesus Christ, join a local church and start reaching out to the lost around them. Now I pray with all my heart that the statistics are not that varied tonight to the people that I'm speaking to. But young people, you hear me, you are needed in the kingdom of God now.

You are needed in the future. This is a very, very difficult season that this world is going to go into. And it's time for you and I to rise up and become everything that God's called us to be and we will only do it in the strength of our Christ.

We will not do it by human effort or by human power or by human reasoning. We will do it by the spirit of God. Our strength will come from the sacrifice that Christ paid for us on the cross of Calvary.

When we are truly born again of the spirit of God, the word of God will begin to lead us and the passion of God will become the passion of my heart and the passion of your heart. It will all become about other people. Your whole life will be lived for the sake of others like little David in Texas who came to Jesus Christ.

I found out just a moment ago, he was named after David Wilkerson, by the way. And at eight years old, the same age that Jesus Christ, that saved David Wilkerson, he also saved this little boy, David in Austin, Texas. And I thank God that the Lord has enabled us to be out online and to be reaching little Davidson, young people like him in this time when we could all be staying home and just enjoying a coronavirus holiday in our houses.

But yet here we are fighting for you, fighting for your souls, fighting for your families. We're not doing it just because we have a desire to be on a camera somewhere. We're doing it because we've been given a new heart, a new mind and a new spirit by the spirit of Almighty God.

We're doing it because we decided to follow Jesus. At some point in our lives, it was not about saving ourselves. It was about you coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

It's a great, great privilege to live life for the sake of other people. It's a great privilege to, you see, you never retire. You can't possibly retire from that.

It's a great privilege to be given for the sake of others who need to know Christ as Savior. And so I'm challenging you with all my heart to move away from easy believism. I'm challenging you to move away from being kept in church because there's a meal at the end of the service on Sunday.

I'm challenging you to move into something that only God can begin to do in your life and begin to live for him with all of your heart. Go beyond coming to Jesus and start going with Jesus. He has a plan for you.

Everyone who's listening to me tonight, he has a plan for your life. He's got a plan for your future. And his plan always involves other people.

It always involves being given for the needs and for the sake of others around that will never know they can have an eternity in heaven with God without you being there to be the extended hand of God's goodness to them. And so this is my prayer tonight. This is what I'm asking God for a spiritual awakening in America.

And it starts with you and it starts with me. It starts with one of us at a time realizing, God, we are called to go past the crowd that are just there for what they can get. We're called to go past the people who just live to doctrinally debate everything that they can possibly debate.

We're called to move past all of that crowd and to move into a place where the spirit of God is now leading us. The heart of God has become our heart. The mind of God is guiding us.

And the will and the plan of God becomes the will and the plan of God for each of our lives. And so my prayer for you tonight is that you would have a genuine spiritual awakening, that you would be lifted up out of whatever place that you are in that just keeps you always asking questions and never getting an answer. Always focused on weakness and your next need.

Listen to me. If we just focus on our needs, you're always gonna have one to focus on every day. You're gonna get through this one, there's gonna be a new one tomorrow, a new one next week, a new one next week, a new one next week.

And you'll spend your whole Christian life just traveling the road looking for free bread. As opposed to somebody who's got this incredible banquet of God going on inside their lives. They have been made a partaker of the sacrifice of Christ, cleansed by his blood, empowered by his spirit, guided by his word.

New minds, new hearts, new value systems, moving beyond the selfishness that Christianity can produce in the human heart, if it's unchecked, and moving into that which really represents Christ in our generation. So I wanna challenge many people tonight that are online. It's time to roll up your mat and put it under your arm and start to walk with Jesus.

It's time to open your mouth and start sharing him with other people. Your needs, if you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, my Bible tells me that all these things will be added to you. He promises that.

But on our part, it's to seek first his kingdom, to seek his life, to seek his will, to begin to walk with him in the pathway that God has for us. This is where you will find freedom. This is where Christ will begin to flow through your life in a brand new way that you've never known before.

And so I'm gonna ask for those who are at home with me tonight to just pray with me tonight. Pray, say, God, take me beyond seeking you for what I can get. Take me into that place, Lord, where I am willing to be given for the sake of others.

Take me to that banquet at the cross where you said, unless I partake of your flesh and drink of your blood, I have no life in me. God, take me to that place that took you to a cross and give me the power to be used of you, Lord, to reach my generation. This is the cry of my heart.

Father, God, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, Lord. God, forgive us for the ignorance of asking for revival and not even knowing what it looks like, not understanding there's a cost to this. Oh, God, but the cost is to others if we don't go.

It's to those who don't ever find you as Lord and Savior. It's to families who are never gonna be healed if we don't bring the healing of the cross to them. Give us the grace, Lord, to live outside of our own fears and struggles and trials and frustrations, my God, and give us the grace to truly live lives that will bring glory to your name by bringing men, women, and children to you as Lord and Savior.

I pray tonight, Lord Jesus Christ, that you would raise us up. You took the 120 that made the choice to go with you and you gave them your Holy Spirit. And they stepped up and out of that room, deciding to go with you.

Lord Jesus Christ, and they changed the whole known world. You took 120 and you changed the world through them, my God. Give us the grace, Lord.

Give us the grace to not be among the 199,098 that just go their own way. Give us the grace to join the two that decide to join you and become a vibrant part of the testimony of your church in the earth. Help us, my God, in this generation.

Raise us up, Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit. I am not offended at your challenge to my heart. I'm not offended when you tell me that I don't have the strength to do this.

I fully know it, Lord. I'm not offended, oh God. Lord, I reach out and I am hungry for more.

I'm hungry for what you have. I'm hungry, God, for the word that can change a nation. I'm hungry, my God, to be used to the fullest, Lord, of whatever it is that you have for my life and not to fall short of what you would have me to do, Lord.

So God, I thank you for every person that's listening online. It's time for all of us to get up. It's time for us to roll up our mats.

We've laid beside the pool of self-loathing long enough and self-focus, my God. Give us the grace, Lord, to be a true testimony of who you are in our generation, oh God. And Father, we thank you, we thank you, we thank you, we thank you.

Lord, I'm just asking you right now, right now, for the Holy Spirit to invade every house of every person that's listening, every room, every apartment, every hospital room, every situation, every hungry heart. Oh,

Spirit of the living God, invade us, Lord, as you did those early Christians in that upper room. My God, invade us.

We are tired of darkness having the last say in our generation, Lord. We are tired of the powerlessness and the potlucks in your house, my God. We are tired, Lord, we are tired, oh God, of easy believism that has no cost to it.

Oh, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of God, revive your church, Lord. There's no hope for this world if you don't revive your church. And take us, Lord, where we need to go and make us into the people we need to be.

I place my own life at the foot of the cross, my God, and I'm asking you for a fresh baptism of your Holy Spirit. I'm asking you, Lord, for a fresh vision, fresh strength, fresh vigor, my God, for what it is that you've called me to do. Lift me out of the weakness, Lord, of this human body and human mind, and take me back to that banquet table of your flesh and your blood, your cross, my God.

I know that's where my strength is. I don't have any strength apart from that, Lord. I have no vision, Lord, I have no future apart from you.

God, I pray with all my heart. Oh, Jesus Christ, raise up your church, Lord. Raise up your church, raise up your church.

My God, my God, raise up your church. Father, thank you. Thank you for invading every heart and home and every mind tonight.

Help us to go with you. We've come to you, but now help us to go with you. And Father, we thank you with everything in our hearts tonight.

In Jesus' mighty name. Greg's gonna lead us in a song, and I'm gonna ask you to take a moment to pray as he does. Just take a moment to pray, those that are at home tonight, and let this word sink in so deep.

Let it just sink in so deep. You know, we've sung in the Christian church for so long, I've decided to follow Jesus. No turning back, no turning back.

And for so many, it's just been a song. There's been no reality in it. And there's a verse that I love, and it says, though none go with me.

It doesn't require a crowd. It requires an individual decision. God, please, please, please, for the sake of somebody, use my life for your glory.

It's not about me. It's about somebody out there that needs to know you. It's about some family that's breaking apart.

It's about some marriage being destroyed. It's about some person about to commit suicide. It's about the addicted, the afflicted, the imprisoned, and the impoverished, and the blind.

God, please, God, please, use my life for your glory. As we sing tonight, let that be your cry. Let it be your prayer.

Nobody has to lead you in this. You pray it yourself in your own living room tonight. In Jesus' name.

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