

Unafraid and Unashamed

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the importance of being unafraid and unashamed in sharing the gospel amidst societal challenges and moral decline.

Duration: 21:37

Topics: "Unashamed"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of overcoming fear and sharing the message of eternal life. He shares a personal story of a powerful encounter where a table full of people unexpectedly listened to the gospel. The preacher encourages listeners to press through any opposition or ridicule they may face in sharing the truth. He also warns of the social storm in the last days, where truth may seem irrelevant and self-centeredness prevails. The sermon concludes with a reminder to stir up the gifts of God and fulfill the calling and commission given by Him.

Transcript

Father, thank you, Lord, for the touch of heaven tonight in this sanctuary. Thank you, God, for the way you are speaking to all of us. You are drawing us, you are speaking deeply into every heart.

You're speaking about something of your heart that you want to impart to us, so that we too, Lord, might be partakers of this incredible love for those that are lost around us at this time. We give you the praise and the glory, God, for your word, for indeed it is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Thank you, Lord.

You tell us that the entrance of your words gives light. You also told us in the last days there would be people who have oil and light in their lanterns. So may we be those people, God.

May our hearts not resist you. Lord, may we be open to hear the things that you are speaking, and we thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen.

A.D. 67. This is the final letter of the apostle Paul to a son in the faith called Timothy. And I personally believe, and I believe I can prove it, that Paul wasn't speaking just to Timothy, but to all the Timothys that were going to come after him.

Because actually, when you get to chapter 3, he starts talking about our day, in the last days, the perilous times that will come. We'll get there in just a moment. Paul is under house arrest.

He's in prison. He knows he's going to be, as life is going to be taken, he's going to die as a martyr. He's fully aware of it at this time.

Society of that day is turning against the Christians. There's a great persecution that's rising against the people of God. The emperor Nero is on the edge of unleashing a bloodbath against the people of God.

Paul knows that he's run his course. He's finished his race. Now, by the Spirit, he's speaking into the future for this young man, for the next generation that are going to have to come after him.

And he knows that it's going to be very hard for the next generation. He knows that this young man, Timothy, who's often been fearful, he's going to have to stand in a terrible time that's going to come upon their whole known world at that time. And the Bible bears witness that a terrible time is going to come to our known world in the last days.

Jesus himself warned. He said, you'll be hated of all nations for my namesake. Listen to what Paul said to Timothy.

He said, this know in chapter three, but know this, in the last days, perilous times will come, fearful times, difficult times, times when that seems so unstable, it would remind the people of that time of when the disciples were in the boat heading to the other side and it started to overflow with water because of the severity of the storm. But in the last days, it's going to be a social storm. It will seem like the whole world has gone mad.

Like truth doesn't matter anymore. It's fallen into the streets. Whoever can lie the best and the most will get to their objectives and let everyone else perish along the way.

As they will say, there'll be lovers of themselves. Everyone Paul says in the last day will be in it for themselves. Lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

When you look at this, you wonder if it could get any worse. It seems like a total breakdown of morality, self-control, civility, truthfulness, natural affection, all gone. It seems like society is finally becoming what humankind does eventually become without the restraining of the word of God and the spirit of God in humanity.

And even worse in verse five, it says, having a form of godliness, but denying its power and from such people turn away and covering it all up with some kind of a religion in the last days. A religion that's powerless, a religion that doesn't really bring anything of the heart of God into view in that society as we prayed about this evening. And Paul says, don't let this self-preserving religion is what it is.

It's going to mix in with the people and say, well, if I just lay low and if I just say small g God words every once in a while, that makes me a follower of God and I'll keep out of trouble. I'll kind of hide in the middle of the population in the midst of all this, a form of godliness. I'll keep it in the house, but I won't be very vocal outside of the house.

Turn from this, turn from this young people, turn from this self-preserving religion, turn from this religion that will not confront a perishing society because the love of God is not in it. If I, if you're not living for Christ tonight, you're going to hell. Do you understand that at the end of your days, you're going into a

place of torment and fire and anguish that's beyond anything your natural mind can comprehend.

You're going into a place where God is not, and you can't even fully understand what that's going to be like a darkness. The Bible says so thick, you can squeeze it with your hand. You can scream, but your voice won't carry because sound won't carry there.

That's what hell and it's forever. If I love you, I will challenge you. I will do everything in my power to win you.

I will try to turn you from that, which separates you from God. I will talk to you about God's love, sending his only son to die on the cross so that you might be saved from this place and brought into an eternal rest with God through Jesus Christ. If I love you, if I don't, then I will just mix myself in with the people and just try to preserve myself.

Try to appear like I'm not confrontational. Try to just be liked by everybody. If I don't love you, creeping into houses, Paul says, and captivating people who are still laden down with lusts.

In other words, morphing the message into something more palatable to those who are living away from God. Always learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth, resisting. It says now as Janice and Jambres resisted Moses, they also resist the truth.

Men of corrupt minds disapprove concerning the faith. These were two spiritists. When God sent Moses in to bring the people out of captivity and into the promised land, these are men who were, they had their form of religion and they didn't mind that the people were still captive.

So they actually resisted the plan of God. They resist the cross. May I put it that way? They resist the message of the cross.

They resist everything to do with the reason that the son of God died. But they will go no further, but their folly will be made known to all as theirs also was. In other words, there's a day coming that will reveal the powerlessness of this kind of religion.

But he says, Timothy, I remember you in my prayers day and night. Chapter one, verse three, I'm greatly desiring to see you being mindful of your tears that I might be filled with joy. In other words, I remember when you first started to follow Jesus.

I remember the, the desire in your heart. I remember how you were so grateful that God loved you. I remember how you wanted truth and you wanted to walk in truth and you wanted your life to count for something that's eternal.

When I call to remembrance, the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother, Lois and your mother, Eunice, and I'm persuaded is in you also. In other words, somebody brought you to Christ. Somebody who was genuine brought you to Christ.

You didn't just fall into eternal life. Somebody talked to you about this, who cared enough about you to tell you. Thank God for that.

Thank God that the man that came to my house didn't carry a mixed message. Thank God that he loved me enough to tell me the truth, confront me in my sin, and tell me about a savior that went to a cross. Thank God that he stayed with it and provoked me to read the gospel of John, which led me to a surrender

to Christ, which gave me everlasting life.

Thank God. Thank God that somebody came. Hallelujah.

Therefore, he says, I remind you, stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the laying on of my hands. When you came to the Lord, God gave you a calling. Timothy, God put his spirit upon you.

God gave you giftings of his Holy Spirit. God gave you a commission in the earth. Timothy, Timothy, Timothy, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a power and love and of a sound mind.

Don't be afraid of the threatenings of this moment in society. Don't back away and try and preserve yourself. Don't settle for a lukewarm religion.

That's really just nothing more than just trying to save yourself. That's not what the spirit that God has given us. And he says in verse eight, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel, according to the power of God.

Don't be triumphed over Timothy by the threatenings of this hour. Don't back away. That's not the spirit that God's given you.

Don't be ashamed of me. Don't back away from my sufferings. Don't back away from the price that I'm going to have to pay so that you might have the gospel and the price that you might have to pay so that others after you might have the gospel.

Timothy, this is a torch that has passed from generation to generation. And sometimes that torch can get hot. And sometimes that torch can burn.

And sometimes that torch can identify you when you'd rather be in obscurity because you're becoming part of a city that's set upon a hill that cannot be hidden. Don't be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Don't drop back in the darkened times, Timothy.

Don't pull the message back to try to preserve yourself or out of a fear of what people who are dying in their sins are going to think of you or do to you. If you love them, you will tell them what awaits them. But share with me in the sufferings of the gospel, according to the power of God.

In other words, Paul himself knew that there's a power that God gives that will enable us to keep going for the sake of others, not for ourselves, but for the sake of others. Who has called, as Paul says, with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. Timothy, God has called you with a holy calling, not by anything that you can do, not by your power, not by your might, but according to his spirit.

And it was a purpose and a gifting and ability, which was given to you through Jesus Christ before time began. Praise be to God. You have a calling, my friend.

You have a calling. We prayed about it tonight. May it start just with one person, one person that we break through that barrier of fear.

And we say, God, you've not given me a spirit of fear, but you've given me power to do this. You've given me love that casts out fear. And you've given me a sound right mind to know that this is the right way to do things.

This is the right way to live. This is a message of eternal life. These are the only words that guarantee security in the future.

So God helped me to press through the angry stairs. Helped me to press through the scorn. Helped me to press through the ridicule.

Helped me to press through the fear of not being loved or appreciated. Helped me to press through for the sake of somebody out there that needs to know God. Years ago, I was after a service on either Sunday or Tuesday night.

I don't remember which one it was. Pastor Claude had just spoken here. And he and I, and one of our musicians went to a local restaurant.

And in that restaurant, sitting at a table by the window was about six or eight people initially. Potentially the most vulgar people I've ever heard in my life in a restaurant. It was awful.

And their conversation was inappropriate in an inappropriate place. That's how bad it was. That's how vulgar it was.

It was about six guys or so and a call girl, and they're talking about what they're going to do after they leave the restaurant. So the owner of the restaurant was so offended by that. He came over knowing I'm a pastor and he says, pastor, I'm really so sorry you have to listen to this.

And he says, I'll prepare a table for you in the back of the restaurant. And I said, no, just wait a minute. Something started stirring inside.

Pastor Claude said, I got a real faraway look in my eye. I got up from my table. I walked over to their table and I said, good evening.

I said, I'm a local pastor. We have a church just around the corner. Oh, it was Sunday night because I invited them to Tuesday night service.

I said, we have a service Tuesday night. If you're still in town, you might want to come. You look like a group of people that could use a time, a little bit of time in the house of God.

And then they suddenly started, they started to mock me. And there was a guy on the other side of the table. He really, really obnoxious guy.

And he said, oh, he says, you're a preacher. Are you? So the guy sitting right in front of you, he said, he really needs prayer. He's a real sinner.

He really needs prayer. So I said, okay, let's pray for him right now. I put my hands on his shoulders and I began to pray Lord Jesus Christ.

Would you help him to understand your love? Would you open the way to eternal life to him? Would you show him there's a better way to live? Would you give him a vision of the cross? They told me that when I began to pray, the whole restaurant stopped eating and bowed their heads, the entire restaurant. Then the guy at the end of the table at the biggest mouth of all, really went off on me, started to curse me with words that of course I'm not going to be able to tell you tonight, but he started to curse me. Who do you think you are? I'll paraphrase what he was saying.

There's a lot of extra words in between, but said, who do you think you are to get over here and bring your religion on us? And why don't you shut your mouth? And why don't you go sit down? And what gives? And then he finally said, after, after he just got it all out and he's yelling at me. So the whole restaurant's waiting to see how this thing's going to go. He said, what, what gives you the right to come here and do this to us? I said, well, I'm a Christian as you already know.

And God speaks to me. And he told me there's somebody at this table that's desperate to know who he is. And the guy who's yelling at me starts to cry.

And he says, it's me. It's me. Takes his napkin.

He starts to cry and cry and cry. I mean, really cry. He said, I gotta know who God is.

I've got to know if there is a God. It's been in my heart for so long. You should have seen the people at the table.

The guy I had put my hands on his shoulders to pray for. He said, this is weird, man. I'm going back to my hotel.

He got up and he left. The girl got up and left some other people. And then he pulled over it.

Now there's an empty chair. He says, sit down, sit down, sit down with us. Tell me more.

Tell us more about this. Truly amazing. See, the point is the point is the point is we have got to break through that spirit of fear, be led of the spirit.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of what a power love loving people enough to care about them of a sound mind, knowing this is true. This is right. You know, this whole thing could have gone south on me, but still it was worth it for somebody who needed to know that there is a God.

I sat at the table with him. I said, will you, will you give your life to Christ right now? And I turned out he was from London, England. And he said, I want to go back to my hotel room and I'm going to call my wife and tell her what just happened.

And I'm going to ask her to pray that prayer with me. But even if she won't, I will, he said, I will give my life to Jesus Christ tonight. So I have to assume that he did that.

That's why Paul says, don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me. Don't be triumphed over by your fears. Don't draw back because it looks like the situation might be difficult.

Don't be put off by the scorn or the words, or some of the people who resist the most are the hungriest of all. They're resisting because generally speaking, they have an offense, a grievance against God. You dig deep enough.

And most of them have lost a loved one in their life and they blame God for it. And they're angry. And that's why their behavior is the way it is.

And if you approach them in love and they know you love them, you're not there to win an argument. You're there because there's a compassion of God. You have power to get out of your weakness.

You have love that casts out fear and a sound mind to know that you're on good ground. You're fighting for something worthwhile. You're fighting for people that are created in the image of God and are eternal beings, either in heaven or in hell, but they are eternal beings.

You and I are fighting for them. We're not fighting against them. We're fighting for them.

For every last one of them, those even who resist their own salvation, we're fighting for them. And may it always be so that we are not a people of cowardice, that we are not a people who know the history of men like Paul, who gave their lives so that we can have the word of God, but then we take it and draw back to preserve ourselves. May it not be.

Then what's the point of praying for laborers in the harvest if we won't go? What's the point of praying if we won't speak? We're not on the wrong side of truth. Do you understand? We're on the right side of truth. If you're in college, stand up for what you believe in.

Find out first what you believe, then stand up for what you believe and have the courage to say to the mockers, you're wrong. You're wrong. I'm standing on the side of truth.

There is a God. You will stand before him one day. You will remember my words one day.

You will wish you had listened. It takes people with courage, takes people who are willing to speak. Now, we're not supposed to be an argument.

We're supposed to be a witness of the one who went to the cross for people. God so loved the world. So if that's not your motivation, then praise God.

If you have a spirit of arguing, then that's not the spirit of God. That's not the spirit that God's given you. You have power to break through the fear.

Love that breaks down a multitude of barriers. Pastor Claude told me that night, he said, I still tell that story everywhere I go. He said, if I hadn't seen it with my eyes, I wouldn't believe it myself.

That a table full of people like that would suddenly be sitting and listening to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. And not only that, the owner of the restaurant, who's Albanian, stood over on my shoulder and he kept saying, listen to this man. This is a good man.

You listen to this man. That's truly amazing. Truly amazing.

Truly amazing. And you say to me, well, what if it went wrong? Well, is it not worth it if it went wrong? It's worth it. It's still worth it.

Still worth it.

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