

What Will We Do When Jesus Knocks?

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being hot for God, not just lukewarm, and the consequences of resisting the call of God to bring freedom and betterment to the poor and afflicted.

Duration: 46:01

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-9, Isaiah 58:12, Matthew 25:35-36, Luke 3:11, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Being Ready"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of following God's chosen path, which involves helping those in need and showing compassion. He highlights the power of God to use unlikely means to bring about His purposes, such as using four lepers to defeat an enemy army and provide food for a city. The preacher encourages the listeners to draw out their souls to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted, promising that the light of Christ will shine through them even in the darkest times. He concludes by urging individuals to open the door to God and be willing to make a lifelong commitment to serving Him and helping others.

Transcript

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Thank you, Jesus, for your presence today. I have a word this morning for this church.

You know, sometimes what I preach goes beyond the borders of this sanctuary, but today I feel the Lord has given me a prophetic word, in one sense, for Times Square Church. Now, it may have a spillover effect in other places, but it's a word for us. If you'll go to Revelation chapter 3, please, with me.

What will we do when Jesus knocks? What will we do, Times Square Church? What will we do when Jesus knocks? Now, Father, I thank you, God Almighty, for your presence, as thick and as powerful as a holy anointing oil. Thank you, Lord, that you're with us. You're wooing us, you're guiding us, you're helping us, you're strengthening us as a people.

Give us hearts to embrace your word and ears to hear it. Help us, Lord, not to stay entrenched in closed positions and in a place where we're not willing to hear you. Father, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit that will give me the strength to speak this word today.

And I thank you for this with all of my heart, in Jesus' mighty name. Amen. Now, wisdom dictates that you and I must never consider ourselves above any portion of Scripture.

If we ever get to the point that we consider that we're above a passage of Scripture, then that is a pride that can actually lead to destruction, according to the book of Proverbs. You remember at the Last Supper, Jesus said, One of you shall betray me. Now, after three years of walking with Jesus himself, the men that were around him at that time knew enough to know that it could have been any one of them.

And instead of saying, not me, everyone around that table said, Lord, is it I? And if we're wise today, we will let the word of God prove us and reprove us. And it can be that it doesn't apply to you, but I think it's a stronger position to have an open heart and to say, Lord, if I have embraced, if I'm moving, if I am becoming something, Lord, that you need to change, you need to alter for your glory, then please, God, give me a tender heart this morning. Revelation chapter 3, beginning at verse 14.

And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, For these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot.

So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. And that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.

Even as I also overcame and am set down with my father in his throne. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit speaks to the churches. Now many who study this passage make the argument that this church represents the true spiritual condition of much that professes to be Christianity in the final days before the return of Jesus Christ.

The last church in Revelation he speaks to. It is an argument that has been presented with some validity. Now there are traces of all the seven churches available in every generation.

But perhaps the Laodicean condition might be the predominant one that we face as a testimony of Christ in the last days of time. The Laodicean church represents a self-focus that has almost entirely excluded the genuine work of God from its profession of faith. And practice.

Now the Apostle Paul would call it a perversion of grace. It's a self-made closed-door fellowship where sin remains unchallenged. Selfishness is encouraged.

And a call of God to be given for the freedom and betterment of the poor and the afflicted is not only shunned, it's actually resisted. Let me just read this to you please if I might from 2 Timothy chapter 3 beginning at verse 1. This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men will be lovers of

their own selves.

Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful and unholy. Without natural affection. Truth-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good.

Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. And all of this is covered by the next verse. Having a form of godliness.

But denying the power thereof. From such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins.

Led away with diverse lusts. Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Janice and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth.

Men of corrupt minds and reprobate concerning the faith. A perversion of grace. A closed-door fellowship.

Sin is unchallenged. Selfishness is applauded. And even considered to be godly.

The call of God to be given for the freedom and betterment of the poor and the afflicted is actually resisted. Paul said as these sorcerers that had gained access to Pharaoh's court. And they had a comfortable lifestyle.

They had position, influence, authority and power. And suddenly a man appears on the scene that is crying for the freedom of an oppressed people. The betterment of those who have no helper.

God has heard the sighing and crying of a society that has been marginalized. Has been pushed to the extreme. And he has sent a man of God.

And yet these sorcerers who claim to have some form of spiritual power actually stand and resist. The man of God who is sent to bring a people into freedom. And Paul said in the last days.

There will be a spiritual authority of some sort that will actually resist the call of Christ. Now think for a moment. In Luke chapter 2. And now this is the first time that Jesus Christ figuratively speaking knocks on the door in the New Testament.

Of the very people who are supposed to be his own. Isn't it interesting that when he's just about to be born into the world. He's knocking vicariously of course through Joseph and Mary.

On the door of an inn in Bethlehem. And these are the people of God of that season. Do you understand? The scripture says he came to his own but his own received him not.

And that's of course the nation of Israel. And in the last church in the book of Revelation that he speaks to. He's knocking on the door of that which represents the body of Jesus Christ.

And tragically receives in measure the same response as in the days in Bethlehem. Now we spoke last week about the fact that their society and their time was much like ours today is. Society was in upheaval.

People were losing their jobs. They had to leave their homes. Go back to their initial hometowns and be numbered for the purposes of taxation.

They've taken inventory. They've gathered most likely by wealth, status and influence. Think of those that were the first to get.

Historians say there was only actually one major inn in Bethlehem. And you can be sure that those who had connections were the first ones to get there. Those who had the influence, the money, the authority, the relatives to make reservations.

They got there first. They scooped up the best rooms. They most likely brought in a measurable supply of food and firewood and everything else that was needed.

And then they shut the door. And they said, well, at least for this season we're going to ride out the storm that we seem to be in. And they left the poor outside to fend for themselves.

I wonder if they nervously assured each other that around the table that God was with them and would help them ride out the storm. And folks, please don't make any mistake about this. We're going into the storm of all storms.

You know it by now. You have to know it. California declared a state of emergency just a few days ago because there's no money to pay any of its civil servants anymore.

Maybe they were singing a song or reading a portion of scripture. When a soft knocking suddenly came to their door. A quiet, a gentle knock.

Revelation 3.19. Remember Jesus said, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. And you can see that somebody's saying in the midst of all of the activity, whatever it is that's going on.

I think the fire is burning in the fireplace. I think people have sat and they've had a good meal. They're talking about the situation.

Some might have been praying. Perhaps it's even possible they had opened the text of scripture and were reading. Maybe they were having a Bible study.

They were an extremely religious people. And another knock came to the door. No doubt there had been many knocks at the door at this time, but I think they had gotten used to turning people away by this point.

I think wrong had become right. And if there's anything we know about Christianity, if we're not careful, wrong becomes right. You think about the history of this country.

How many went to church to praise the good Lord, but yet we're abusing an entire race of people. And you know what that's all about. And many of you have seen that.

You've lived through that. Where wrong became right. And if we're not careful, that's exactly what happens.

We can start turning away people and somehow, in the illogical thinking of the human heart, take wrong and make it right. You remember that was the temptation of Satan to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. You can be as God and you can determine what's right and what's wrong.

It doesn't matter what God says. You make the determination. You don't have to follow the narrow thinking of God.

And so, as the knock comes to the door, you can see somebody saying, Well, who's there? Who's at the door this time? Oh, it's a poor couple. They're about to have a child. And they're asking if we have any room for them here.

Now, can you imagine each person there looking at his plate of warm food, the comfort of the fireplace, and the thoughts of the nice warm bed upstairs? Think for a moment of the awkward silence as each person considers the inconvenience that opening that door might bring. A young couple. Somebody's got to give up their bed.

Somebody's got to give up a portion of food to feed them because they're obviously poor. From the report that's coming from the person at the door. There's going to be... She's going to deliver a baby.

Are they going to lose sleep? Is there going to be some measure of groaning or even screaming as that child is born? And then there's the crying of the child and there's the inconvenience that comes with childbirth? I think it's inconceivable that anybody called by the name of God could turn these people away. I don't know how you feel about it. I feel something inside that begins to boil.

Just the thought of it. A woman in labor. A young couple at the door.

And God's... It's family, folks. It's not even... It's family at the door. They're all of the same blood.

The kindreds. The tribes. They're all the sons and daughters of Jacob.

And yet, how callous we can become. How cold-hearted we can become. When society moves to a place where the preservation of ourselves becomes more or less the predominant thought.

And we're moving into that now. Very, very rapidly, actually. Can you imagine the relief if someone might have said, Well, tell them we'll pray for them.

Yeah, tell them we'll pray that God make a way for them. We'll pray. You know, it's funny.

I remember the time when I was a young Christian. And I was only saved a couple of years. And I was going to church.

And I was saved in a fairly affluent church. And I remember after a service one Sunday, I went down and there was a men's coat room. And here we are in the men's coat room.

A lot of the men are down there. And this fellow comes down and says, There's a man upstairs who just came into the church. And he has no coat.

Now, this is a sub-zero Canadian winter day. It's very cold out there. Now, I had just been reading the Bible.

And I remember where the soldiers and such came to John. And they said, Well, what do we have to do? And he said, Well, one of the things he said, If any man has two coats, let him give one to the one that has none. And I had just read it that week.

Now, I don't have a lot of money compared to these other people. And I had just bought a brand new coat. And I had just brought it to church.

I think it was my first Sunday with my new coat hanging on the hook. Now, I've got an old one back home. And I've got a new one hanging on the hook in the church.

And I remember standing there as all these men who have a whole lot more money than I do. It was pocket change for these men to do something about this. And yet, they all stood in silence.

And everybody kind of stared at the hook of his coat. And then finally somebody actually said, Tell him we'll pray about it. I remember the words.

And I remember standing there thinking, Well, what is there to pray about? This man doesn't have a coat. And the Lord said to me, But you have two. And I said, But my old one is at home.

And the Lord said, Give him your new one that you've been saving for all this time. And so, I'd just been reading the word of God. I'd just read that verse.

And I remember thinking, What are these people praying about? Most of these men that are standing here, It's chump change to buy this man a coat for them. And for me, I had to save and scrape for weeks to be able to buy a new coat. And yet, I took my coat and I gave it to this usher that had come downstairs and said, Here, give the man my coat.

Now, I went home that day in minus 10 or 15 degree weather with no coat. But I tell you, I believe to this day it was the turning point in my life as a Christian. It gives me an understanding of this passage of Scripture.

I've actually walked through it. I've lived through this in small measure. They were neither hot nor cold.

I mean, they would actually stop and stare at their coats for a minute and actually give it a minimal amount of thought. After singing the hymns and after the professions of dedication to God and to His work, after whatever it is, the kind of a benediction prayer was prayed and declaring ourselves to be the people of God. And God sends a man in out of the cold who turned out to be the backslidden husband of one of the ladies who actually attended that church.

And they have moments of conscience. That's what happened with Laodicea. But they were rarely, if ever, translated into action.

That's why they were neither cold nor hot. They weren't so cold that they just simply pushed it away. But they weren't so hot that they would actually do something about it.

They would think about it. And if you and I are not careful, we deceive ourselves to where we get to the place that we feel that thinking about something is the same as doing it. I'm thinking about giving to the poor.

I'm thinking about abandoning my life to the purposes of God. I'm thinking about one day taking a portion of what I have and giving it to somebody who needs. I'm thinking about it, so leave me alone.

I'm thinking about it. It doesn't mean I'm actually cold to it, but it doesn't mean I'm hot to it. I'm just in that place of just thinking about doing something about human suffering.

Jesus said to the Laodiceans, when he said, I'll spew you out of my mouth, it just simply means I'm going to stop confessing you before the Father. I'm confessing you as my church, but if you stay in this condition, if you don't move from this condition, if you don't move into becoming what the church is supposed to be in the earth, I will cease to confess you before the Father. I wonder if some of them at that table at that inn in Bethlehem went back to their Bible study.

Oh yes, where were we before we were so rudely interrupted by this young couple? Oh yes, here we are. Is this not the fast that I've chosen to lose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry and you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see them naked, you cover them and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh. Then shall your light break forth as the morning.

Your health will spring forth speedily. Your righteousness will go before you and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you will call and the Lord will answer.

You'll cry and he shall say, here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger and speaking of vanity or means empty talk. If you move to the burden to remove it and this pointing forth of the finger, which is just simply not doing something by blaming somebody else for the problem and empty talk.

And if you draw out your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light will rise in obscurity and your darkness will be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought and make fat your bones. And you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.

Now, folks, the tragedy of all of this is that these people knew these verses of Scripture. They knew them inside out. They knew them backwards.

They could argue it theologically. But yet when Jesus himself came knocking at the door, when the Son of God came and it was time to put what they had learned into practice, one by one, as one of the New Testament parables says, they began to make excuse. One said, no, I've just gotten married.

I don't have time for this or I've just bought a farm. I have to go and check it out. I've just acquired some oxen.

And some of them, if they were here today to argue the point, would say, but it makes so little sense to give to others in calamitous times like these. Surely God knows that we need a supply for ourselves. It can't be possible that God would be asking us to take everything that he has given to us and to use it for human suffering.

But haven't you read that the ways of God are not the ways of man? How much sense do the ways of God make? When he takes Elijah midway through a famine, that's about to bring the nation back to the worship of the true God for a moment in time. And he takes Elijah and when Elijah runs out of water and food and he says, now go to the widow, I've commanded her, go to a starving widow. He said, I've commanded her to feed you.

It doesn't make sense, the ways of God, but it's a type of the church of Jesus Christ. God said to Elijah, and as he says to us today, if you go to the widow, if you move towards the starving in the time of famine, he said, not only will she be provided for, you will be provided for. It will unlock to you the resources of

heaven.

It doesn't make sense in the natural. The natural man wants to gather his supply, wants to hide it to himself and lock himself behind a closed door and let God, in a sense, deal with human need. I've got my own problems.

I don't need to be looking after somebody else's problems. It doesn't make sense to use four lepers to defeat an enemy army and open a food supply for an entire city, but that's the way God works. Takes the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things to bring down to nothing those things that have become mighty in themselves.

And he says to you and I today, if we will draw out our soul to the hungry, if we will satisfy the afflicted, the light of the testimony of Christ in us will rise in obscurity. And even the darkest of times will seem as the noon day to us. God says, I will guide you continually.

I will satisfy your soul in drought. I'll make fat your bones and you'll be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not. And not only that, but those that are born into the kingdom through you will be those who repair the foundation of many generations and you will be called the repairer of the breach and the restorer of the path to dwell in.

Think about Jesus for a moment crying out to this church. O Laodicea, let me come in. He says, behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and sup with him and he with me.

And to him that overcomes will I grant to sit down with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my father in his throne. If you'll open the door. Remember at the end of time when he says, come blessed to the Lord, enter into the joy of your salvation.

For I was hungry and you fed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was a stranger and you took me in.

I was sick and you visited me and I was in prison and you came to me. When did we do it to you? The people say to him. And he says in so much that you've done it unto the least of these, my brethren.

You've done it to me. Number one, we dare not ever turn the family of God away in difficult times. In so much you've done it to one of the least of these, my brethren, the least of these.

You notice here that when he calls together those who are going to receive a reward in the last days, he doesn't say, well done, Carter Conlon, you pastored a church of 8,000 in New York City. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. There'll be nothing like that said.

None of those things. Those things are great, but they don't really matter in the long term. It's not about what I did in ministry.

It's about who I am as a Christian. Individually, you and me. I can be preaching from this pulpit and closing the door of compassion in my heart to human need.

If any man sees his brother have need and shuts his bowels of compassion, how does he say the love of God dwells in him? Folks, it's not about the fact that we meet together and we have wonderful worship. It's about what you and I are collectively as a church and individually as people. There are some here today would say, Pastor, when human need comes to New York City, drain the bank account of the church.

Take all the money out and use it to meet human need. And I fully intend to do that in the days ahead. But what about when the bank account is drained of the church? How about your bank account? Ah.

Gets quiet now, doesn't it? My bank account? You mean my bed, my meal, my fire? My sleep, my inconvenience, my trial, my trouble? You're talking about... I mean, I've got troubles enough of my own. But you see, it's not about what we collectively do as a church. It's about what we individually do as the body of Christ.

And a lot of what you do will never be seen. It'll never be known. You'll never get a tax receipt for it.

But it will be marked down in the kingdom of God. Luke 13, 24, Jesus said, And you begin to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And he shall answer and say to you, I know not whence you are.

That's an incredible... He said there's a day coming when those who have shut the door are going to have the door shut on them. And he says, Then you shall say, we've eaten and drunk in your presence, and you've taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I don't know you.

Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. There's a day coming when the door will be shut, but it's not us shutting it anymore, it's God shutting it. Then you can just see the day coming when the religious start banging on the door of the ark one more time.

Hey, listen, we studied the Bible. We sang your songs. We were in places where... I went to Times Square Church, for goodness sakes.

But then he says, But none of it ever became part of you. It was nice to learn it. It was actually... You were more or less hot for the truth, but cold to its application.

You loved the word of God. You loved the truth of God to a point until it brought you to the point of actually following Jesus and being what Jesus has called you to be in the world. What a tragedy when so many of satin churches in this nation have been led into another gospel in the time of crisis, find themselves actually locked out of the provision of God, locked out of the ability to see, locked out of the compassion of God, simply because they had locked the word of God out long before any of this ever happened.

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and you stone those that are sent to you. How often I would have gathered your children together as a hand gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not. Behold, your house is left to you desolate.

Verily I say to you, you shall not see me until the time when you shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Now, this to me talks about the mercy of God. He knocked in Bethlehem.

He knocks again in Revelation, but he knocked in the center of both in Jerusalem, the very heart of worship, the very center of what was supposed to represent God and the earth, the city of God, Jerusalem. He came and knocked on the door, but they were so entrenched in certain viewpoints and ways of doing things, so calloused and hard that they even were enraged when he would heal somebody who was in infirmity on the Sabbath day. And he walks away from Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's about to go into destruction and be overrun by the Gentiles.

But I love this passage of Scripture because when he says, you'll not see me again until, which means that I have knocked, you've resisted, but I'm willing to come back and knock again. And I will come to you

when you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. The word blessed in the original text means to speak well of what Jesus says and who he actually is, to let one's life come into agreement that not what I desire, but what he speaks is what is right for my life.

That's what it means. It's not just to say the word blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, but Jesus, your words are right. Your direction for my life is the only one that I want.

And what you tell me to do, I will do. And so Lord, knock on the door of my heart again. God Almighty, don't ever stop knocking on the door of Times Square Church.

And if we've resisted, if any of us have, and you've walked away, come and knock again because we will open to you this time and say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Can you imagine if they had opened the door to Mary and Joseph and Jesus? Can you imagine the difference in that end? Can you imagine the glory that would have come down? The angels that had to appear on a mountainside would have appeared inside of the end. The glory of the Lord would have been in that end.

The presence of God would have been there. The miraculous would have abounded. People would have been dumbstruck and awestruck just because they took the time to let in this poor family that were about to have a child.

When we turn our hearts away from helping the poor and the addicted and afflicted, we rob ourselves of the actual presence of God. All that is left is religion and reading of scripture. A feel-good religion that, when calamitous times come, doesn't feel very good anymore.

There's going to be a lot of people at this door, folks. There's going to be lines, I believe, in the street looking for food. And it's going to take time, and it's going to cost us.

What will we do? What will we do when Jesus knocks? What will we do? What will we do? Well, what we do when Jesus knocks depends entirely on how we are responding to his knocking on our hearts today. What is he asking? You know, suddenly, we don't suddenly just open the door and enter into the fullness of God's work when we have built up resistance to God in some area of our lives. When you start locking the door anywhere, it becomes easy to lock the door everywhere.

And you can actually get quite religious in it, self-justified. You'll be growing in knowledge, but not growing in grace. What is he asking of you now? What is that soft knocking of God asking from you? Is he asking you to leave where you are and come home? Is there somebody here this morning that you're just in the wrong place? You've taken the life of God that he's given you and you've gone far away from the heart of God and you know it.

How long will you resist God? Don't think that you're going to become this super Christian in calamitous times when you're not even in the right place now. Is he asking you to believe for the strength to get up out of somewhere that you shouldn't be? Doing something you shouldn't do? With people that you shouldn't know? Is he knocking on the door of your heart? Did you feel it? In the club you were in last night, did you feel it? As you were looking at pornography on the internet, did you feel that soft knocking of God on your heart? Did you feel it? Those who woke up in bed this morning with somebody that's not your husband or your wife? Did you feel it? That soft knocking of God where Christ says, let me come in, I'll sit down with you, I'll open to you a source of supply and strength that will take you far beyond anything that you've ever known before, anywhere you've ever lived, anything you've ever dreamt you could become. Is he knocking

for you to simply have an open heart and be willing to be given for others? That's a great starting place.

Just the willingness. Just the willingness. That can be a victory in itself to say, God, I'm just willing.

If you knock on the door of my heart, I'm just willing to open the door. I'm willing. I don't know how to find the strength.

He said, just open the door. I'll give you the strength. I'll give you the heart.

I'll give you the compassion. And I'll open to you a supernatural supply. There'll be a supply that comes.

Folks, these things in the Bible are not just, they're not comic books. This is reality. The oil will not fail.

The meal will not go away if you just simply do it God's way. Is he asking you tonight to open the door of our lives to someone we'd rather not open it to? It's Christmas time. And all of the family and faces start coming back that we'd rather not deal with.

People that we just really hope don't come to our door. We hope a letter from them doesn't come to our door. We don't even want to see a Christmas card from these people.

But Jesus says, would you open the door? And I'll come in and I'll give you the supply. We are preparing in this church to feed a lot of people. We're making provision and have been in the seven good years.

We've been putting away handfuls for the seven lean years. We're preparing to feed, but it can't be just a corporate thing. It has to be individual.

There's going to have to be a lot of works that we do that are not seen and not known by men. God forbid that when Jesus knocks on the door of this church, that we turn him away. God forbid that you get out of your apartment on Monday morning and you see some kid just across the hall that goes to school every day and he's starting to look more lean and more lean and you become aware that there's not very much money to go around in that home.

God forbid that you and I have the resource to make a sandwich and simply don't do it because it's inconvenient. God forbid. God forbid that any family from this church ever end up on the streets because nobody would open the door to them.

God forbid that anybody ever shows up in this church at this door with nowhere to live, with three and four kids in tow and we say, we'll pray for you. We'll pray for you. Matter of fact, we'll put it on the top of our list on Thursday night.

God be with you. Here's a chocolate bar. God forbid.

It's gotta be more than that. And the Lord will give us the grace and the strength in these coming days. If we have to put people in the annex, we're gonna put them in the annex.

Whatever we have to do, that's what we're gonna do. Now I know that Jesus has been knocking on the door of many hearts. He wouldn't have given me this message if he hasn't been.

It really is time to start saying yes to him. It really is time to open the door. Whatever it is that he's asking of you, it's just simply time to open the door.

And we open the door by simply coming into agreement with him. Remember when we say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord? The word blessed means what he says is right. And where he leads is where I need to go.

Not what I think, but what he thinks is important. Not where I wanna go, but where he's leading my life. That's what it's all about.

And I believe with all my heart that the Holy Spirit has been speaking a hundred ways deeper than I have today. He's been going deep into many hearts. He's been knocking on many doors.

And you know what it is that God is asking you to do. You say to me, Pastor, where do I start? Well, start at the start. Start at where you are.

Start at whatever it is that God's asking you to do. If he's knocking on the door and saying, put away that bottle of whiskey that you've got hidden in your closet, then start there. Start with some form of obedience.

Start with saying yes to God. Start with opening that door, saying yes, Jesus. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Blessed are you, God. Blessed, oh, thank God you've come to my heart. Thank God you've come to my home.

Thank God you're asking me to lay this down. Lord, I will lay it down. And he says, now I'm gonna come in.

We're gonna sit down and I'm gonna unfold a banquet before you. I'm gonna give you strength and provision in the midst of your enemies. And at the end of your days, you're gonna be able to say, goodness and mercy followed me all the days of my life.

Thank God. There is a point, folks. There is a point where you make a decision and it affects the rest of your life.

And it's the point where you simply say yes to God and you say, Lord, let this be the pattern of my life. Let me not justify wrong. Let me not call indifference holy.

Let me not call selfishness godly. Let me not hide behind this facade, but Lord, let me not hide from human need. Whatever that need is, Lord, you're going to meet it through my life.

I'm believing that with all my heart. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Whatever the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart today and whatever he's calling you to do, folks, it's a decision you have to make.

But I'm going to give an altar call here in a moment and in the education annex. And those who are willing, when you're coming to this altar, is a symbol of actually getting out of your seat and coming and opening the door and saying, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. No matter if it's an inconvenient thing to me or not, or whether I fully understand it or I don't, God is asking me to do this thing.

And so I'm simply going to obey him. And if it means giving up my bed, I'll give up my bed. I love this story, and I want to close with this.

Some of you might be familiar with it. It's quite a well-known story. And I don't remember the dates and everything, but it actually happened.

And I read it again last year of a Christmas pageant that was held in a local school. And there was a young boy there with Down syndrome, considered mentally handicapped. And they gave him the position of the innkeeper.

And he had one line. When Mary and Joseph and the baby came to the door, he was supposed to open the door and say, there's no room at the inn. That's his whole line.

There's no room. And so they went through the rehearsals and everything, and then finally it came to the night of the play, and the knock came on the door. And this little fellow opens the door, and he looks, and he'd never seen them in costume.

And so Mary is crying, and she's very pregnant, and Joseph looks desperate, and they've got this fake donkey. And here they are at the door. And please, my wife's about to have a baby, and we have nowhere to go, and we don't know what to do.

And he just stood there and stared at them. And he didn't say anything. And the people in the audience are going, there's no room, no room.

The people behind the curtains are going, there's no room, no room. And he said, I know what I'm supposed to say, but she can have my room. And we call him mentally challenged.

That's the irony of the whole thing. Now, I think the people yelling no room were mentally challenged. I don't care what I'm supposed to say.

She can have my room. And that's just the way it has to be. God lumped me in with him.

I don't know what I'm supposed to say, but she can have my room. Father, I thank you, God, Lord, Jesus Christ. Oh, Jesus, we have prayed in times past, send us the poor, send us the addicted, send us the widow, send us the orphan.

And now you're about to answer our prayer in great measure. Jesus, help us to open the door. Lord, help us, God, to get beyond our study and to be hot for the work of God.

Lord, give us grace to start saying yes to you. Whatever it is that you're asking of us, whatever you're asking of me, Lord, help me to say yes and to open the door. I ask it in Jesus' name.

Now, we're going to stand, and if the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart, come to this front of the sanctuary, and let's open the door together. Whoever God is speaking to, you can slip out of your seat in the balcony, go to either exit and come down. Main sanctuary, education annex, just come.

Let the stepping out of your seat be just the opening of the door. Lord, whatever you ask of me, whatever you ask me to do, this is what I'm going to do. Whatever you bring my way, don't let me back away from it, God.

Don't let me be selfish. Help me to be generous. We're going to worship for just a moment, then we're going to pray together.

Let's do that. Lord, make your way here, please, if you will. Lord Jesus Christ, Father, we ask today, I ask as the pastor of this church, Lord, that we be truly light and salt in this city.

Lord, you are good, and your mercy endures forever. You are kind, and you've left us on the earth to be a physical display of who you are. So help our hearts, Lord, to line up with yours and our ways and our practices to be such that you can point to us and say, this is my church.

These are my beloved and whom I'm well pleased. God, help us. Whenever you knock, not to create excuses to leave the door closed, whatever area of our hearts that you ask for, whatever practices you want to change or to expand, I pray, God, we always be willing to hear you.

I pray for my brethren, Lord, that you give us a supernatural compassion. It has to be your compassion, and we have to know the difference between human need and human greed. God, help us to understand these things.

Be that voice to us that says, this is the way, walk in it. Speak clearly to us, Holy Spirit. Father, we thank you for this, God.

Give us ways, innovative ways, that we can be a blessing to this city, to our young people in the schools, Lord. God Almighty, let it be known that the hand of God is being extended in the city. Naomi came home because she heard there was bread in Bethlehem, and Ruth came with her, and the lineage of Christ was greatly brought to another place because of this.

Let it be known that God's people are generous. Break the bonds of selfishness, Lord, off of all of us, Lord, and let our hearts be an open door. I thank you for this with all my heart.

In Jesus' name. Hallelujah.

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