

When Darkness Fails to Comprehend the Light

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon explores the choice between following Christ and the allure of worldly desires as exemplified by the crowd's rejection of Jesus in favor of Barabbas.

Duration: 57:17

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1, Jeremiah 6:14, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 19:10, John 19:5, Romans 13:1, 2 Corinthians 4:7

Topics: "Following Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the listeners to not lose hope in the face of failure and to press on towards God. He references a scripture from Isaiah, urging the audience to arise and shine because the light of the Lord has come upon them. The speaker then transitions to a passage from John chapter 19, where Jesus is crucified. He prays for the church to be freed from the influence of ungodly men and for a resurrection of true conviction. The overall message is a call for the church to be revived and to embrace the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

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John chapter 19, going to begin at verse 5 in a message entitled, When Darkness Fails to Comprehend the Light. When Darkness Fails to Comprehend the Light. I'm going to be asking you today as we read this to place yourself in a scene.

I want you to look at this, now this historically obviously is a reality. But picture yourself as being there in that time and perhaps even today because things really don't change. John chapter 19, verse 5. Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man. When the chief priest therefore and officers saw him, they cried out saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify him for I find no fault in him.

The Jews answered him, We have a law and by our law he ought to die because he made himself the son of God. Now this is of course the passion of Jesus Christ. He is on his way to the cross fulfilling the will of his father.

And purchasing for you and I a redemption from the power and weight of our sin and by God's grace from an eternal hell. I thank God for that knowledge this morning and I hope you do. That because of the sacrifice of Christ I am not destined for an eternity in hell.

I'm going to heaven with my savior forever and ever and ever. By God's grace, thanks be to God. The crowds are God's own people.

They've had his history. They've been the people of Abraham as it is. They know all the scriptures.

They know the text. They know the promises. They know that through their father, forefather Abraham was going to be birthed a lineage of which they thought they were that lineage.

And through them there's going to be this multiplication of the knowledge and the power of God that is going to become a blessing to all the world. And so here they are. Each man in his own heart has a perception of who God is and what God must look like.

And I want you to be among that crowd today. The thousands that are gathering after the three year ministry of this man called Jesus who's declaring himself to be the son of God. He has been raising the dead.

That's not even in dispute. He's giving sight to the blind. They know that.

He has multiplied loaves and fishes from just a few and fed thousands. They're aware of it. They've been the recipients of this goodness that came from the hand of God.

But now he appears to be captivated by authorities that have imposed their will as the people see it upon the nation. Now keep in mind that the authority at this time was Rome. And the only reason this authority is in place is because the people of God in their past had forfeited the relationship with God that God had destined them to have.

And because they had forfeited this relationship, they had come under foreign dominion. Now Pilate brings out Jesus Christ and he says to the crowd, behold the man. Behold him.

Now the word behold in the original text means I call your attention to anything you may see or hear or mentally apprehend about this man in any way. In other words, examine the man. Take a look at him.

Consider this man. And perhaps when Pilate, of course, is speaking in measure on behalf of the authority that God has allowed to be established in that nation. Very important to understand this.

Romans 13 says every soul must be subject to the higher powers. There's no power but of God and all the powers there are are ordained of God. God will allow governments to be placed over nations for a season for a certain reason.

And of course, the reason has always been to bring the people back to the knowledge of who he is. Behold the man. Take a good look at this man.

Now this man, the scripture tells us, is wearing a crown of thorns. Not very desirable to those who have ambition. He's wearing a purple robe.

Not much glory in this. And now. Pilate, of course, is speaking on the behalf of a governing authority, which I said earlier, has been given to the people because they defaulted in the relationship with him.

Jesus said to this man, this governor, as it is in John 19, verses 10 and 11. Pilate said to him, Do you not speak to me or speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee? Jesus answered and said, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. You could have no power.

You see, Jesus was saying, God put you in the seat of authority that you are in right now. And he put you there for a reason. And all the power that you have is because God, my father, gave it to you.

Now, this man, with the authority of the state that was then in power, stands and the living Christ, the God who created the universe, is brought out. And he says to the people, Behold the man. Now, let me just read to you for time's sake, because I've got a lot of scripture to go through and we won't have time for everybody to find these.

So you'll have to just listen. You can read it later on. Isaiah 53.

Here's what Isaiah says. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? In other words, Isaiah says, God Almighty, this is the arm of your strength. And you've given me a report to bring to the nation of Israel.

But God, who has believed this thing? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant. In other words, you didn't manifest your glory on the earth as this incredible warrior, as men anticipate that you will come. You didn't come as a conquering king descending out of the clouds.

At least not the first time. He will the second time. But you came as a tender plant.

You're born as a baby and a manger among the poor and those who had insufficient time to find lodging. And as a root at a dry ground. You don't look like you have life in you.

You're talking about yourself being a king. But he says, he has no form or comeliness. And when we shall see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him.

There's nothing about this man that invokes in the naturalist sense that we are looking at the king of the universe. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid as it were our faces from him.

He was despised and we esteemed him not. Now, not only is he unattractive to the people, but he's asking others to follow him in this unattractiveness. He stands there, doesn't look like a king.

And Pilate's words are really incredible when you begin to see it in the light of saying. And it's really a man who's speaking because God has put him in authority. And he says to the people, behold the man, examine this man and see if he is worthy of death.

See if there's anything in him that you find attractive. And of course, as the people look at him, the majority fulfill the scriptures in Isaiah. There's nothing.

He doesn't look like he has any power. There's nothing attractive about him. If he is the son of God, why doesn't he just take authority? Why don't we all just rule and reign with him right now? What in the world could he be thinking? But not only is he unattractive, but he's asking others to follow him.

Now, how true it is, folks, to follow Christ, there has to be a true conversion. There's nobody can follow Christ just with a mental assent that this is the son of God or I don't want to go to hell. I want to go to heaven.

So here's the formula. I just pray this prayer. Now I'm saved.

Now, folks, I'm not making light of that. But there's got to be more than just praying a prayer. There has to be a conversion and a conversion means a complete upheaval of a former inner value system.

If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. He's a new creation. There's this life that comes into him in the old things, the old way used to think, the old things he pursued, the old things that he considered of value, his old image of himself.

Everything begins to pass away and behold, all things are made new. There has to be an upheaval. That's what conversion is.

If you've never experienced this upheaval, I tell you on the authority of God's word, you have never been converted. You might have gone to a church somewhere where somebody said some nice words to you and you moved in your emotions and came to an altar and prayed a prayer. But if you are truly born again of the spirit of God, you are experiencing an upheaval inside.

An absolute overthrow of an old kingdom. There's one greater than the strong man that used to live in your house. And he has come into your house and he's overthrowing tables and throwing out old goods.

And he's changing the way you think and the way you live. He's giving you a new value system. He says to Ezekiel, when God comes, he says, I give you a new mind.

I give you a new heart. I give you a new spirit. If I'm truly born again by the spirit of God, I have a new mind.

I don't think the way I used to think. I'm now thinking the thoughts of God. I'm now moving in unison with the heart of God.

I have a new spirit. Before I used to look in the mirror and consider every day my own frailties. But now I look in the word of God and I'm not considering my frailty.

I have the God who created the universe living within me. I have a new spirit. If God said do it, it can be done in the name of Christ himself.

But now these people look and they say, we have a law. You see, Pilate speaking on behalf of the authorities said, I find no fault in this man. And it's so true because he is really there because of their default.

He is an authority. When you understand Romans 13.1, the authorities that exist are established by God. And if you understand this principle, Pilate is now just as the head of the high priest, a little later on, said better that one man should die than the whole nation should perish.

He said he spoke this, not of himself, but he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost and wasn't even aware that he was prophesying about Christ's death. Pilate stands there and says, I find, now this is on behalf of the governing authorities established by God. He said, I find no fault in him.

They examined him and he's here, but there's no fault in him. He's not here because he's done wrong. The authority had to recognize that this was a sinless man who was simply obeying the will of his father.

But in verse 7 it says, the Jews answered and said, we have a law. And by our law, he ought to die because he made himself the son of God. Now Leviticus 24.16 is the law that they were referring to.

And this law says, he that blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death. Now they were expecting a Messiah, make no mistake about it. If he had come in a flaming chariot like the one that took Elijah away, they would have received him.

If he had come in the way that their natural mind should have perceived the Messiah, the one who's sent of God to be, then they would have received him. But they're looking and they're saying, this unappealing man who stands before us has blasphemed the name of God by calling himself his son. We stand here and we know for sure that God would never manifest himself like this.

We're sure of it. This unappealing dry root, this tender plant, this man with a crown of thorns on his head and a purple robe who seems to be set at naught by all of the mockers around him. We have a law and by our law, he should die because he made himself equal with God.

And we know, we know we're the children of God. We have the history, we have the scriptures, we have the testimony, we're Abraham's children. And we know that God would never come to us in this fashion.

And so just before this in John chapter 18 verses 39 and 40, Pilate now representing the authority is making every attempt now to release this man for he has committed no wrong. He says in verse 39 in chapter 18, we have a custom that I should release him to you one at Passover. Will you therefore that I released you the king of the Jews? They cried all again saying, not this man, but Barabbas.

Now Barabbas was a robber. That's incredible. Think about this for a moment.

If you were in the crowd and on one hand you see that you see the governing authorities in the middle who are there by appointment of God. There's no doubt about it. All authority that is has been ordained of God.

On one hand is the son of God. And on the other hand is a man who the Bible says is a thief. He says in verse 40, he was a robber.

He's a thief. Luke 15 describes this man Barabbas as a man who made insurrection or rebelled as it is against the existing authority. So he's a lawless man.

He's also described as a man who committed murder in this rebellion or this insurrection. He's a murderer. So on one hand, you have the son of God.

On the other hand, you have a thief, a lawless man and a murderer. Who do you think the children of Abraham would vote for? It would seem like such a non-issue. And all of a sudden, the crowd, not all the crowd, there was a remnant there who must have been horrified at what was happening around them.

There were no doubt. I mean, we know that for a fact, but they were certainly the minority who are in this crowd. And this crowd starts chanting, Barabbas, Barabbas, Barabbas.

You know, give us a thief. Give us a lawless man. Give us a murderer.

And Pilate says, what should I do then with this one who's your king who's called Christ? And the chant starts again, crucify him, crucify him, crucify him. Now, Barabbas was the image of Satan himself. It's a type, folks.

You have the Son of God and the Son who bears the image of the heart of God and the power of God and the passion of God. On the other, you have the image of Satan himself. That's what the typology is all about.

John 10.10, Jesus described Satan as a thief. He said, the thief comes not but for to steal, kill and destroy. I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.

Satan is described as a lawless man. Matthew 16.23, Jesus said, now Satan had gotten a hold of the mind of Peter. Get behind me, Satan.

You are an offense to me. For thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. In other words, Satan, you have no taste for the way God does things.

But you prefer to move in the very manner of ignorance that you have planted in the hearts of fallen men all around you. Get behind me. You are an absolute offense to me.

John 8.44, Jesus described Satan as a murderer. He says he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. Now this image of Satan was transmitted to mankind in Eden through sin.

And in man's fallen condition, it causes him to embrace a wrong image of God because he falsely assumes that God works in the same way that he does. That's really the bottom line. This can't be God.

This looks closer to what we like and what we most identify with. We don't want to follow a Christ who talks about serving now and reigning later. Luke 22, 27 and 26, I'm among you, he said, as he that doth serve.

He that is chief, let it be as he that doth serve. Christ is saying, I'm here as a servant. And if you want to be among those who are the highest ranked as it is in my kingdom, you must also follow me and become a servant.

And looking at the results of this as it is, people are saying, no, not this. We don't want this kind of a Christ. We don't want to follow a Christ who uses his resources for others and not for himself.

Luke 9, verse 58, Jesus said, Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. We don't want to follow one Christ who undoubtedly has an outflow of supernatural power, but he uses none of it to gain for himself a reputation or access to this world's corridors of influence. We want the power, but not the path.

I mean, he has power. We know he has power, but look at the path he has chosen. We want to destroy the Roman influence, and he seems to be under its submission.

We don't want this. Matthew 17, 22, said the Son of Man, Jesus speaking, shall be betrayed into the hands of men. We don't want this Christ, the one who invites others to follow him, sometimes into the same kinds of suffering and humiliation which now stands before them.

Matthew 24, verse 9, he said, And you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. We don't want this Christ. This is not the Christ we want.

Away with him. Crucify him. Give us Barabbas.

Give us one who is more in tune as it is with what is in our hearts. We want to reign now. We want the treasure of heaven now.

We want the victory now. We're willing to rebel against every authority, even God's, to get it now. And we will even do it in God's name.

Psalms 106, verse 24, speaking of the children of Israel, it says, Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word. And here is Christ standing before them, and thousands now gathered, and they're having to make a choice, and they despised the pleasant land. Because Christ is the promised land, folks.

There is no other promised land. Promised land is not a physical place. The promised land for you and for me is Jesus Christ.

It's the abundance of his redemption. It's the fullness of his life. It's the passion and power of his heart.

That is the promise for us, oh God. Help us to understand these things. They despised it, and they cried out that day, Give us a thief! Give us a thief! We don't want this man.

We don't want his claim on our lives. We don't want to follow the path that he's calling us to. Peter warns in 2 Peter chapter 2, that false teachers will arise in the church of Jesus Christ.

And he says in verses 2 and 3, By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. They will speak evil of those who choose to follow the pathway that God has laid before his church. And through covetousness shall they with faint words make merchandise of you.

Give us a thief! The people cried. And so a thief is set up over them. Many, many people today throughout the world, they don't want the Christ or the Bible.

Their cry is exactly the same as this crowd, although they don't see it that way. We don't want this one who gives away everything to the poor. Give us a thief! And so a thief stands and begins to expound the word of God to them.

And with covetousness, with pretended words, supposing they're hearing from God, they make merchandise of the people of God. They literally strip them bare of anything that they thought they might even have. Jude chapter 8 warns that in the last hour, there are lawless men going to come into the body of Jesus Christ.

Jude said, folks, you've got to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. These lawless men are going to come in. They defile the flesh.

I looked it up in the original text. It means they stain the image of man. Man is created in the image of God.

Through Christ he is to be restored to this image that God wants him to have of God's own life through his Son within him. But they come in and they stain this image of man. They despise dominion.

They cannot be brought under authority. They hate all authority except their own. And quite often they will demand everybody walk under authority.

But they themselves despise dominion. They cannot be brought under the dominion of God. And they speak evil of dignities.

I always thought that they rail on anything and everything that's in authority. But I was so shocked when I looked it up. And I saw that the word dignities is doxa in the Greek.

And it means that which represents the glory of Christ. They speak evil of that which represents the glory of Christ. They come to church agents and say, If you are suffering, there must be sin in your life.

If you are not rich, something is wrong with you. And they speak evil of those who truly embrace the Christ of the Bible and say, God, if you bless me, fine. If you don't, fine.

As Paul says, I've learned. I've learned to be content. I've learned to have all things.

I've learned to have nothing. I've learned to be in a crowd that I'm appreciated. I've learned to walk where I get rocks thrown at me for preaching the gospel.

I've learned to be on a ship on a smooth day. And I've learned to grab a piece of wood in the midst of the storm and swim to shore. I've learned.

I've learned. Give us a murderer, they cry. I think of Ahab in 1st Kings 22.

Now, Ahab sat under the ministry of Elijah. And near the end of his life, God brought another prophet by the name of Micaiah into his court. He was about to go into a battle, but he was going to get himself killed.

But Ahab, even though he's sitting under this kind of ministry, cannot submit himself to the true image of God that stands before him. Instead, he gathers to himself 450 false prophetic voices who say to him, go up and prosper. The Bible says in the last days, men will be turned from the truth, and they will gather to themselves a heap of false teachers.

And you've got to see Ahab is about to be killed in this journey he's on. But he's gathered these preachers, and they're all there for influence. They're all there for power.

They're thieves, they're murderers. They're gathered together for reasons other than to glorify God. And they're standing there, and you've got to see this, and they're saying to this man who's on an insane course, go and prosper.

Do what's in your heart. God will be with you. There'll be incredible prosperity come your way.

Except for two voices, Elijah, if he would have been inquired of, and Micaiah, who came in to the presence of this man and spoke for God, and said, I see something that you don't see. I have a vision from heaven, and I see that you're heading in a course where you're going to be killed on this course if you don't turn around and stop. Incredible.

This murderous voice is sending this man and many others to their deaths. We don't want to see, we'd rather see false prophets in our generation as all just well-intentioned but somewhat misguided people. We don't want to see them the way they really are.

They are murderers, sending thousands and thousands of people who want to know God to their deaths. Sending them on a course, a collision course with that which is going to take away their life. Micaiah stood and pleaded, but Ahab was so hard, he couldn't hear.

Now, he wanted Barabbas. He did not want the voice of the one and true and only God. John 19, verse 11, Jesus said to Pilate, You could have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.

Therefore, he that hath delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. Now, that's an incredible thing. I've meditated a lot of times on this verse of Scripture.

What really is he saying here? He says to Pilate, you could have no power over me. God gave you the power you now have. And at this moment, at least, he is using that power in a righteous manner.

Now, many people don't see it that way. But really, at this very moment, I'm not talking about when he finally caved under the pressure. But at this particular moment, he says, I find no fault in him.

You've brought him to me. You've accused him. And I'm asking you to examine the man with me, because I find no fault in him.

And Jesus said, you don't have any power over me. The power you do have were given to you from God. Therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Now, in other words, here's the way I see it. Those who would deliver the image of God to those who would betray this image, at whatever level, have the greater sin. Now, Isaiah says it this way in chapter 30, verses 10 and 11.

Here's where the people of Israel had gotten to in Isaiah's time. They say to the seers, see not. And to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things.

Speak unto us smooth things. Prophecy deceits. Get ye out of the way.

Turn aside out of the path. And cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Something had gotten a hold of the people in Isaiah's time.

Now, they're about to go into captivity. Just like Ahab was about to go into a time of physical, he already was suffering spiritual death, but it was about to be a physical death. And Isaiah said, here's the spirit that's gotten a hold of a whole generation of God's people.

They say to those who truly see, don't see. To those who could truly speak from God, don't speak to us from God. We want you to tell us smooth things.

Prophecy deceit to us. Turn aside out of the path. In other words, get away from this Christ, this unattractive God that you're unveiling to us.

Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Now folks, this is really pivotal because for years I used to blame the false prophets and teachers for much of the spiritual climate of our day. We are in an incredible decline.

Now, not everywhere. Thank God there are pockets of churches and pastors and Christians all over the world who are seeking God and there are revivals genuinely happening in much of the world. But not so necessarily where we are today.

I used to blame the false prophets and the teachers for much of the spiritual climate. But listen to me, they couldn't be in their positions of authority and they would have no audience if the people who live under their delusions hadn't delivered his image into their hands. It's as simple as that.

They are there because the people want them to be there. They are there because the people say, no, no, we don't want this Christ with the thorns and the robe and the mockery and the hard path who serves and gives. We don't want this Christ.

They don't have the courage to say, give us Barabbas. They say, no, give us this other Christ on the other side. This other Christ, this thief and this lawless Christ and this robber, give us this.

And so they put the image of Christ into the hands of those who distort his image. Folks, there wouldn't be a false prophet in New York City today if there weren't people who wanted them there. There weren't people who are gathering to them and worshiping like trees in the wind and say, oh, tell us more, delude us even more.

Tell us to go and prosper. Oh, tell us that it's going to be well with us, even though the scripture says it's not well with you. Tell us things we want to hear.

Tell us smooth things. Tell us that we have this incredible destiny, each and every one of us. Oh, tell us that we're going to work miracles.

Tell us, tell us, tell us that we're going to be kings and we're going to reign here and now, not just some ambiguous time in the future. We want to reign now. Tell us we're going to be rich now, not just someday in the future.

We want it now. We want all of it now. Take us out from under this authority.

Take him and this Christ to the Bible. And we find nothing attractive about him, so we don't want him. Get him out of our sight.

Take him away from us. Jeremiah said, a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rules or are leading in the flesh.

And my people love to have it so. But Jeremiah says, what will you do when it all comes to an end? Tell me, what will you do? What will you do when the carpet is pulled on everybody's security? What will you do? Standing before the people in John 19 is God incarnate. This is God in a human body.

Not just a man, not just a figure, not just an opinion, not just another way. This is God. There is no other God.

There is no other name. There's no other savior. There's no other truth.

There's no other way. There's no other path. This is God.

The one who would soon declare that all power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Matthew 28, 18. The God whose ways are not the ways of man, whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts, whose ways are higher than our thoughts.

The God who John says in John 1, 4 and 5, in him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. But John says in chapter 1 in verse 12, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

As many as received him, as many as in the crowd that day who looked at this Christ, when Pilate said, behold, the man who have stopped maybe in our generation to consider Jesus one more time. People who are here in Times Square Church today, people who are going to hear this message on the Internet in the days to come, and who stop in all of the religious busyness and all of the opinions about God and begin to consider Jesus Christ again. And say, this is Christ.

This is the son of God. What he says is what I must believe. Where he leads is where I must follow.

If he says I will be hated of all nations for his name's sake, then I will be hated. I dare not set out to be loved by all men. If he says my life may have to endure some deprivation and suffering.

If he says the purpose of the Christian church is that I be given in equal measure as it is others, I can't be offered as the redemption of humanity. But the scripture says I'm to offer my life as a living sacrifice to God which is my reasonable service. If I am to be poured out that others who are destined for hell might find him as Lord and Savior, then so be it.

This is the Christ that I want. I want the Christ of the Bible. I don't want a homemade Christ.

I don't want a lawless Christ. I don't want a Christ who is a thief. I don't want a Christ who is a murderer.

I want the Christ of the scriptures. The Christ of the Holy Bible. The Christ who says I'm called to be a servant.

The Christ who says I'm not to live for my own will but for the will of my God. The Christ who says I've got an appointed place for you in my body and in my kingdom and I will guide you into that place and in that place you will live a life that brings honor and glory to my name. I want the Christ.

If he sends me to Africa on the mission field, I want the Christ that is walking there and has my name on a pathway to walk with him. Let everyone else lust for power. Let them lust for social wealth.

Let them lust for status. Let them buy for the quarters of influence. I want Jesus Christ.

As many as received him, he gave them power. Power. It's an internal thing.

It's something that only you know and God knows. You can't fake it. It's real.

There's an inward love for God. It says oh God, give me the mountain of the giants over there. If that's your will for me, give me that mountain.

It's something in you that when everyone is cowering and looking at their armor, you come in with a sling and five smooth stones and say what's going on here? Is there not a cause? Why are you allowing these powers of evil to defy the armies of the living God? He gave him power to become the sons of God. That means to be set apart for his purpose alone. The glory of God revealed in them.

The glory of God. The new life of Christ where I can stop on the street corner and I don't have to throw a pile of scripture at you. I've got a life in Christ and Christ has got a life in me.

And I can tell you what God is doing. I can look at you and people will look and they will see the eyes of Christ. There's a life within me that's not my own, it's his.

Gave them power to become the sons of God. He breaks the dominions of sin and breaks the power of evil. You don't have to live the rest of your life in self-help groups.

You can come out of that room alive and anew in Christ. A brand new creation leaving behind you what is behind you and going on to the glory that God has for your life. He gave them power.

He said it might not be attractive to your natural eye, but I tell you, if you embrace this Christ, there's power. There's power. There's power.

There's power. There's power. And in that power, we're set apart for the only purpose of the church.

The only purpose that you're here and I'm here is that the glory of God be revealed in us. The glory of God is a changed life. It's that first love relationship that Jesus talked about to the church of Ephesus.

Where 30 years in the Lord, you walk up to somebody and say, I just got to tell you what God is doing for me. As infinite as God is, this new life is always, always, always, always lifting me. Taking me out and bringing me in.

You need to know this. I've literally grabbed people over the years. You need to know this.

That the glory of God be revealed. The glory of God. It's time for the glory of God to be revealed.

It's time for the divorce rate in the church not to equal the divorce rate of the world. Actually, it's time for there to be no divorce in the church of Jesus Christ. Time for the glory of God to be revealed.

It's time for people who are Christ to start speaking the truth in the workplace. And where everyone else is falsifying records and documents, your pen writes the truth. When everyone else is stealing, you are giving back.

When everyone else is taking, you are giving. When everyone else is complaining, you are speaking Romans 13.1. No, the authority here has been placed by God for a reason. And the Bible says we are to walk under this authority.

In so much that the authority is not asking us to do something that is blatantly contrary to the word of God. We are to walk under this authority. The glory of God revealed in earthen vessels.

Amazing. And the redemption of fallen men. You can't tell me, because I don't believe it, that you truly belong to Christ if you have no passion for the lost.

It's not possible. You might have a head knowledge of Him. You might be in the crowd contemplating Him.

But you see, in Christ, you see the passion for your own soul. If you were in that crowd, if I was in that crowd today and looked up and I would see the passion of God. When you consider that He had the right to send us all to hell for eternity.

And it wouldn't have been unjust or wrong. He had the right to do it. He had the right to take this whole world and just command it to be turned into nothing.

And it could have been. Could have recreated it. But instead He became a man.

A man that fallen men hate. And in Christ I see the passion of the Father. I see the passion of the heart of God for my soul.

And oh, the audacity. The absolute audacity of that day. Of a people.

God's people. To say, give us Barabbas. The incredible audacity.

The incredible foolishness of any people at any time anywhere. That would look and say, no, this doesn't suit my image of myself. I see myself as prosperous.

I see myself as victorious. I see myself as having some great destiny. I see myself as a world mover, shaker and changer.

This man looks like a loser to me. Give me Barabbas. And so Barabbas comes down, puts on clerical robes and starts leading thousands of God's people.

Oh, the incredible audacity. Of it all. You see, we've arrived in a place of history where Christ is scoffed at by godless masses who are ignorant of their own peril.

This is an Ahab generation. Scoffed at. Despised by so many who don't know that we live on the edge.

Who is to say that we would not be the victims of a first strike nuclear assault before this day is through? Who's to say it? Who's to say that you and I may not be dissolved and into eternity? The book's closed now. The judgment seat of Christ. Who's to say it? Masses of ignorant people scoffing at Jesus Christ in our generation.

Absolutely ignorant of where they're going. We live at a time when Christ himself has to endure authorities that he is allowed to exist. As they carry on in their delusion that they have authority over his image and the extent of his influence.

It's a total delusion. Authorities that God has allowed to exist. Trying to push him out of the courts and push him out of schools and push him out of the marketplace.

And push him out of the minds of a whole generation. What absolute audacity. And where many who profess to know him really don't want to.

Oh, we know him. Yes, we love him. Oh, we've been raised in the church.

But we really don't want to know him. But yet history also teaches us that in that crowd were at least 120 people who embraced the true image and ministry of Jesus Christ. There may have been thousands.

And folks, I don't know about you, but I don't care what the thousands say. I don't care what a hundred thousand, a million have to say. There were 120 at least in that crowd.

At least. Who said, no, Jesus. When the whole crowd is drowning them out, they're all yelling, Barabbas, Barabbas, Barabbas.

There are 120 voices at least in that crowd are saying, Jesus, Jesus. I want Jesus. I'm going to live for Jesus.

I love Jesus. This is the Son of God. Let the whole works you go this way, but I'm going with Jesus.

And this 120, God came. And as the scripture said, he gave them power to become his sons and daughters. And they changed the course of history.

When they were trying to shut the church down in Acts chapter 17 and verse 6, they drew this man called Jason and part of his house into the place of judgment. And here was the testimony of the church of that time. These that have turned the world upside down have come here also.

They've turned the world upside down. 120 people given to the real Christ of the Bible. 120 people who said, God, we will wait.

We will tarry until we are endued with power from on high. But God, when you touch my life, I will come out in the open. I will stand for you.

I will speak for you. I don't care if the whole world is bloodlusty for you. If they're all yelling, crucify you.

I don't care. I will stand in the marketplace. I will stand in my community.

I will stand in my city. I will stand in my country. And I will declare your name to this generation.

Hallelujah, Lamb of God. Hallelujah. I will speak your name when everyone else is cursing it.

I will speak it reverently. When they are mocking you, I will praise you. When they are living like devils, I will live like a son or daughter of God in the midst of a darkened society.

It doesn't take a lot of people. That's the amazing thing. It doesn't take a whole crowd.

It takes a few. Your neighborhood doesn't take a... You don't have to go door to door trying to get some kind of consensus to win your neighborhood to Christ. It only takes you.

It takes a person somewhere. Starting in a family. Moving to a church.

Moving to a neighborhood. Moving to a block. Moving to a borough.

Moving to a city. Moving to a country. And it says, no, I'm going with this Christ.

I'm going with the Christ you spoke very plainly to me and John and Matthew and Mark and Luke. And he made no... Nothing confusing. He said it very clear.

This is the Christ that I'm going with. I don't know about you. But before I die, I'm believing that God's going to turn something in this world upside down.

I'm just believing it. We're heading into Burundi next year. A place that has known genocide.

Where there has been 300,000 people slaughtered during the Hutu and Tutsi uprising. A place that needs an incredible healing. I'm believing God that the plans of the enemy for that country will be turned upside down and the glory of the Lord will come.

I believe God with all my heart. Because he will choose to do so. And he will do it through the church that is in that nation.

And for those that he sends from this side of the earth to speak for him. Isaiah. Let me close with this.

You're familiar with this scripture. Isaiah chapter 60. Isaiah says, Arise.

Shine. For thy light has come. And the glory of the Lord is risen upon.

Now the glory is the kavod. It's the weight of God's life within you. It's not an outside thing.

It was in the Old Testament, but it's now an inside weight. It's this mightiness and the weightiness of the life of Jesus Christ is now in you. Behold, darkness shall cover the earth.

And gross darkness the people. In other words, a darkness that is... Who would have ever thought that there could be a darkness so gross that when given the choice between the Son of God and a murderer that the people would choose a murderer. A thief and a lawless man.

But the Lord shall arise upon thee. And his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light.

And kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up your eyes round about and see. All they gather themselves together.

They come to thee. Thy sons shall come from far. And thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Then thou shalt see and flow together. And thine heart shall fear and be enlarged. Because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee.

And the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Now this is a prophecy for the nation of Israel. Please make no mistake about that.

But we are now... The New Testament says that a Jew is a person who is a Jew inwardly now. No longer of the letter. But whose heart has turned to God.

It is not a replacement for Israel. And the scripture is not talking about somebody pushing Israel out of the way. Because the gospel is as open to the Jew now as to the Gentile.

But it is for every believer in Christ. It starts with the word arise. Which means get up.

Start to pursue God. There had to be people in that crowd who just started pushing through and getting closer. As hopeless as the moment may have seemed.

They started pressing through the crowd. Jesus. Everyone around is yelling crucify him.

But they are pressing through. Jesus, Jesus. Now they could have no knowledge at that moment of what was going to happen to them just a few days down the road.

And it may have looked hopeless. And that is maybe what you see when you look at your own life. The failure.

The repeated times you have tried to live for God and you have failed. But one more time. It is as if God is speaking something inside so deep.

And you start pressing through the crowd. Arise. And shine.

For your light has come. And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. The Lord told me.

And I never say that lightly. But I know it in my heart this morning. To give an altar call in this church.

In the main sanctuary and the education annex. For the 120. The person.

Who says. I am going to press through. Until I know God's power.

If he says wait I am going to wait. But I need his power. And I am going to press through.

And when his power touches me. I am going to step out into the open. And I am going to be a testimony for God in this dark, dark day that I am living in.

If that is in your heart. Today. As we begin to stand I am going to ask you to meet me at this altar.

And in the annex you can stand between the two screens. And we are going to pray a simple prayer together. Would you do that right now? Wherever you are.

Let's all stand together. Just make your way here. I am speaking to the 120.

Who can say I want Jesus and I want everything he has got for my life. If it is sorrow. If it is pain.

I don't care. As long as it is him. I want him.

Father you said that. Jesus you said that as many as believed. You would give the power.

To become the sons of God. The daughters of God. And I pray today Lord for those that have come to this altar.

My own life included. God give us the power. Of a new heart.

A new mind. And a new spirit. Show us the ways that are not man's ways.

Give us a desire. Like the apostle Paul who so. Joyfully embraced.

A pathway that the natural man would consider insane. But he knew something awaited. At the end of this journey.

Oh God. Oh God. I ask you Lord to break the yoke.

Of the reasonings of men. About Christ. Off of your church.

I ask you Lord to. Set your people free. God from the influence of ungodly.

Men. Who stand in their voices. Send people to death spiritually.

And sometimes even physically. Oh God. I pray Lord that you rise up a church.

In this generation. That has to be reckoned with one more time. They could crucify Christ.

But they couldn't ignore him. And God. I pray father.

That there be a resurrection. Of true conviction. In your church.

You said the Holy Spirit would come. And he would bring the knowledge of sin. Righteousness in the coming day of judgment.

I cry from the depths of my heart. That your church again. In this country.

In North America. Become the church again. My God.

My God. I cry for deliverance. Lord your house needs to be set free.

Lord they have been under the ministries. Of those that feed them straw. And send them to build bricks.

God almighty. God almighty. Hear our cry today.

Lord let freedom come into your church. Let freedom come to your people. God set your people free.

Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus. Come.

Lord pull back the veil. Show every man. And woman and child who's hungry who you are.

Let the pathway of our God become the delight of our mind and soul. Lead us in the ways of your life and your power. Cause us to stand and be a testimony in our generation.

God I yield my life to this purpose. We yield ourselves as a church to this purpose. Be glorified in New York City.

Jesus be glorified. In our neighborhoods. In our boroughs.

Our places of work. On Broadway. On Wall Street.

Everywhere we go. Be glorified. God almighty let it not be religion as usual.

Let the supernatural life of God come into his people. Lord we cry out. We cry out as the 120 cried.

We want to be filled with your power. You've got to come Holy Spirit. You've got to come.

You're the only one that can take us out of all the religious games. Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit come. God fill your people. Fill your church again.

Oh God fill your church. Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. We cry out for you.

We want you Lord. We want your ways. Though the world despise us.

My God. My God. Let us glorify you.

We want to glorify you on this side of eternity. Let the passion of your heart be our passion. Oh God.

Oh God. Oh God. Let your work be our work in this generation.

Oh Jesus. Oh God. Be glorified.

Let your heart be satisfied in your pride. God we ask you believing it with all our hearts. This is the conclusion of the message.

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