

# When Even Prayer Seems Impossible

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the struggle of prayer in difficult times and the importance of relying on God's strength.*

**Duration:** 50:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 26:36, 2 Corinthians 4:1, Colossians 1:27

**Topics:** "Impossibilities"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a living relationship with God rather than just embracing theories about Him. He prays for an explosion of faith in the church and asks the Holy Spirit to come and breathe on them. The preacher discusses the feeling of impossibility when faced with tasks such as forgiving someone who has wronged us. He highlights the need to shift our focus from ourselves and our own strength to relying on Christ. The sermon concludes with the message that without the power of the Holy Spirit and a reliance on God, we are incapable of finishing the race of faith.

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## Transcript

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I want to speak about the time when even prayer seems impossible. When even prayer seems impossible. Matthew chapter 26, verse 36.

Then cometh Jesus with them to a place called Gethsemane and said unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, that would be James and John, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. And then said he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.

Tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

And he cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep and said to Peter, What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And he went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples and saith unto them, Sleep on now and take your rest.

Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. I'm trusting with all my heart that I'm going to be able to convey something that the Lord's been speaking to me about this passage of Scripture. Let me begin by asking a question tonight.

Have you ever been in a place where something that you have been asked or told to do, and it's something that you know and believe that you should do, but you say to yourself, This is impossible. For example, to forgive someone that has wronged you grievously. And you look at it and sometimes you even give it your best try.

And you try to say, I forgive you, but even the words are twisted that come out of your mouth. Because it's so contrary to the true feelings of your heart. And you give it your best shot, but you come out and you walk away and say, I can't do this.

It's impossible. Or if the Lord asks you to love someone that is unlovable. The Scripture says, Love your enemies.

We heard it tonight. And then you go to work and you've got a boss or a co-worker that's absolutely demon possessed. And you really try to love them in the capacity that you have to even reason what this kind of love is supposed to be.

And you give it your best shot. You go in Monday morning because you've been at Times Square Church and you've heard that you should love your enemies. And by Tuesday, three o'clock in the afternoon, you're hanging your head over your desk and you say, this is impossible.

Or have you ever tried to be something or do something that you've never been or done before? You've read about it or you've heard about it. Maybe God's even spoken it to you and you know this is right. And this is something you want to be.

You want to do this. And you remember how you started out with such enthusiasm? And you said to yourself, I can do this. I will do this.

And just like a boxer, you went into the ring and you weren't even 30 seconds into the first round and you were knocked out. And you come out of it saying, this is impossible. I thought I could do this, but I can't do it.

And if this is how you're feeling, you're in good company. For most of us here have lived through the same experience. I remember when I first got saved and I started reading books on prayer.

If you've not read them, probably do yourself a favor. And I would suggest you don't just stay in the Bible. But I remember reading about praying patient who, when he died, they said he wore grooves into the hardwood floor with his knees kneeling beside his bed and rocking back and forth.

I remember reading about praying hide and Reese Howells intercessor and all of these books. And I remember thinking, I can do this. I'm young.

I love God. And I believe that this is the way the Christian life is supposed to be lived. But I remember getting up morning after morning before the sun rose.

And by the time the sun finally did come up, I'm kneeling like the hardwood was out of the question. I'm kneeling on the carpet. My face is down between the cushions of the couch and I've just woken up and I'm saying this is impossible.

I can't do this. Try as hard as I might. I can't do it.

I could fill the room with words for 45 minutes at best. And it was just so hard. I'm not a morning person.

I'm not like Pastor Neil. He is a morning person. He's so much of a morning person.

He can hardly go to bed at night. And I'm not like that. I'm a night person.

I function better at night. I don't do well in the morning. That's changing for some strange reason as I get older.

But think of David, now the king. In 1 Chronicles 13, it says he consulted with the leadership around him. Actually, the Bible says in verse 1, he consulted with the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, and the commanders of every leader.

Every leader, actually. And he said, we didn't inquire from the ark of God in the days of Saul, so let's go get the ark of God and let's bring it to us. Let's relive history as it is.

In those days, they sought the ark, and God moved, and, of course, they all knew the history. And they all said, this is a good thing. Let's do this.

And they went, and the Scripture says they agreed this was a good thing to do in their sight, and they went to get the ark, and the Bible tells us in verse 7, they carried the ark of God in a new cart. Now, the Philistines had constructed a cart, and they had sent it back when the ark had been taken captive under the backslidden ministry of Eli and his sons, and the ark had come back into the camp of Israel in this new cart. And everybody accepted that up to this point, I suppose, as the proper way to approach God or to have God approach them.

And they brought the ark of God in this new cart, and verse 8 says, David and all Israel played before God with all their instruments, with all their might. In other words, they gave their whole heart and strength to this. And it seems there can be a time, beloved, when it seems that what we're doing is so right, and we can give all our heart and our strength to it.

And you can see them, the strummers are strumming, and the trumpeters are trumping, and the dancers are dancing, and the praying people are praying, and there's so much sweat going on, they're all doing it with all their might. And all of a sudden, this insignificant young man called Uzzah, in the midst of this

multitude, because David called together all the coast of Israel, there would be thousands and thousands of people, and all of a sudden, this young man, Uzzah, puts out his hand to try to stabilize the ark when the oxen stumbled, and God kills him right on the spot. And the Scripture tells us in verse 12 that David was afraid of God that day.

As a matter of fact, David was beyond distressed. He was angered. And he called the name of that place Perez Uzzah, which means there's a breach been made against Uzzah.

David looked at this and said, God, don't you seem to understand, we're doing this with all our might. We're doing this with the best of intentions. And this young man just puts his hand out to stabilize the ark, and you killed him right on the spot.

And so David said that day, the Scripture says David was afraid of God that day, and he said, how shall I bring the ark of God home to me? In other words, what he's saying is, how can I serve God? How can I know the victory and the strength that the presence of God among His people has always brought when I am trying to serve Him with all of my might, and yet this seems to be how I am rewarded, or we are rewarded for our service. Now, of course, the Scripture tells us later in 1 Chronicles 15, verse 13, that David began to understand that there was a failure, because he said we did not seek Him after the due order. We had zeal, but our zeal was not according to the righteous standard of God.

There's a way to serve God. There's a way that God has prescribed that we should serve Him, in other words. And David says we entered into service, but we didn't do it the way that God prescribed that we should.

In other words, of course, you know in the Old Testament it was only the Levites, in a certain prescribed manner, that were allowed to carry the ark. We sought His presence, but we didn't seek His presence in the manner that He has written that we should seek Him. Now, that's very important, so remember this.

It's a way that God has prescribed that those who want to walk closely with Him must follow. Now, in our opening text, in Matthew chapter 26, the Scripture says that He asked three disciples in particular. He took all of His disciples to the garden, but Peter, James, and John were the inner circle as it is.

Peter probably was one of the leaders, the natural leaders in this particular group. He took them a little farther than the others, and then he asked them, he said, Now watch here and pray with me. I want you to pray with me.

He was trying to explain to them, I'm going into an hour of incredible trial, and I need you here at this time. Now, Luke 22, verse 45, tells us about the same scenario. He said, He found them sleeping for sorrow.

There was a sorrow that had come upon them. As I meditate on this, I think that perhaps they were confused. They were overwhelmed at the events unfolding around them.

And of course, you can't misunderstand the depth of the spiritual conflict that would have been happening. There's a spiritual conflict that they're not even, they can feel it, no doubt, but they're not aware of what it is. They have had in their minds a sense of how God should be operating.

And the way Christ is moving seems to be going in an opposite way to the way they think it should be. Peter himself has stood at one point before Christ, and he said, No, not you. You're not going to Jerusalem.

You're not going to be crucified. No, this is not the way that you're going to go. Now, all of a sudden, they see events already are spiraling all out of control all around them.

And naturally, you and I, in the same circumstances, we have the advantage of knowledge today that they didn't have. Oh, the word was there, but they weren't hearing it. And they were confused.

They were overwhelmed. I think they're very saddened at the realization that the Christ that they truly loved might be taken from them. I think it might have dawned on them, perhaps for the first time, not understanding the whole mission, but the sense that we are really going to lose Jesus.

Maybe the words were coming back. The things he had been speaking for the previous days are all of a sudden unfolding. They're beginning to realize this really is going to happen.

There really is going to be a betrayal. And for some unknown reason, our hope is going to be overwhelmed in this moment that we're living in. And there's a sadness and a sorrow they don't understand because, of course, they don't see the whole picture.

And lastly, it's certainly possible that they are disappointed and discouraged at their own inability to live up to the incredible boasts that they had recently made. You see, they had been boasting. They had been boasting before God.

If you follow with me right back to just before our opening text in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 31. Then said Jesus to them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after that I'm risen again, I'll go before you into Galilee.

Now he's telling, now keep in mind, this is God speaking. And he's not only speaking, but he's quoting scripture as well. And so now they're confronted in a sense by what God is speaking.

He says to them, now listen to me. Tonight you're all going to fail. Tonight you're all going to run.

You're going to be put in a position that you're not able to stand. And you're all going to be offended. In other words, the context of the word offended is different than the way we read it today.

It means scattered, afraid. You're not going to be able to stand. I'm going to be smitten tonight and you're going to be scattered.

But I'm going to rise again and I'm going to go before you into Galilee. And so here's the word of God. Now Peter immediately, verse 33, answered and said, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

Now this is an incredible thing. Now this is religious zeal. But it's religious zeal that is standing directly in the face as it is of the revealed word of God.

Jesus is saying one thing and Peter is responding in the opposite spirit. He's actually defying the word of God. And he's doing it with religious zeal.

Folks, religious zeal does not make something right. We're living in an age of tremendous zeal. And there are people out there trying to serve God with all their might, not realizing they're standing directly in the face of revealed Scripture.

And zeal doesn't make it right. Peter answers and he's indignant and he stands and he musters his strength and he says, No, all men may run from you. I don't care what the word of God says.

I don't care what you say. I don't care what's written in the Bible. All men may fail, but I will not fail.

Then Jesus said to him, Verily I say unto thee that this night before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. Now again, folks, you've got to understand, this is the God who created the universe is speaking to him. This is Christ who's not arguing.

Even the humility of God to even enter into this dialogue. It's amazing when you consider it. Everything he speaks is absolute truth.

It's not even negotiable. If he says let there be light, there's light. If he says turn the light out, the light is out.

And here he is arguing with this man. And Peter said, Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee. And likewise said also all the disciples.

Now this is an amazing thing. They have a choice. The other eleven can either agree with God or agree with Peter.

And Peter is such a natural, strong leader. Plus also, this is what is in the heart of all men. We don't want to see ourselves as weak.

We don't want to see ourselves as incapable of performing something. We all want to see ourselves as strong and able. And so they all agree with Peter.

So here the whole thing, they're all literally believing a lie about themselves. Right at the very pivotal point of their own redemption. So now we leave from here.

And we go into the Garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus says, Alright, you all sit over here. Now Peter, you, because Peter of course is the one who led the whole pile of them into this error.

Of thinking about themselves. And James and John. Now John's the one who leaned his head on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper.

Peter's a man with natural strength. I will not deny you. And John may have been resting on the fact that, well, I love him.

You know I love him. He knows I love him. I'm the disciple Jesus loves.

And certainly I can't fail. And I don't know where James fits in all of this. But Jesus calls them all in.

And he says, Come a little farther. Now he says, I'm trusting you now all to pray with me. And then in chapter 26 in verse 40.

He comes out after praying. And he comes to his disciples and finds them asleep. And says to Peter, What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Now folks, this is a passage of scripture that the enemy has used to condemn so many people for years.

For generations since the day it was written down. Because they failed to understand the context of this. We look at it and they can't pray for an hour.

They pray for 48 minutes and walk out all condemned. Hearing this voice, What? Could you not pray with me for one hour? Folks, I've lived through this. I'd pray for an hour and 15 minutes and I'd get up off my knees.

What? Could you not pray with me for an hour and a half? I'd pray for an hour and a half. What? Could you not pray with me for an hour and 45 minutes? There's just no end to this. And the enemy takes this and just literally grinds the people of God with this scripture.

But it's not as harsh as it sounds. It sounds harsh. But folks, it really isn't that harsh.

Now, I want you to consider this just for a moment. I don't know when the next New York marathon is. But let's say every one of us here today.

How far is the marathon? Does anybody know it's 10 miles? 26 miles. All right. Well, let's say the next New York marathon.

I want everybody between now and then to go out and get your finest athletic clothes that you can find. Get a nice pair of shoes. You can get a shirt with a number on the back.

And show up at the starting line. And buddy up to some runner that's come from somewhere around the world. And I could just envision somebody here.

Now, really get it in your spirit that you can do this. I can do this. I can run 26 miles.

I can do this. I can keep up with the best of them. And go to the starting line and start up a conversation.

Say, well, where are you come from? Oh, you're from Kenya. Oh, that's wonderful. And what position do you hold in Kenya? Oh, you are the national champion.

Well, I couldn't have picked a better person to run this race with. Now, others may fall behind. But I'm with you.

I'm going to run with you all the way. Everyone else may fail and fall and become exhausted. But you can count on me.

I'm going to be there the whole race. And so the gun goes and away you go. And you're running the best you can beside Kenya's national runner.

And when the race is all over, then, of course, Kenya's national runner would have to find you, go back very close to the starting line where you are on a stretcher. And the EMS people have got a thing, a blood pressure thing on you. And they've got something in your veins.

And you're about a mile into the race. Let's say three quarters of a mile, and the Kenya national runner bends down and says, What, could you not run with me one mile? You made such a boast of your strength. You made such a boast of your ability.

And you were fully convinced. But, you see, you don't have the inner resources to do this. You and I don't have the inner resources to run that.

Now, there might be somebody here who can do it. But I know for sure I don't. I know for sure Pastor Neil doesn't.

We don't have the inner resources to run this kind of a race. Now, I don't care how nice an athletic uniform I get or how many books I read. I am 52 years old.

I do not have the inner resources. I would die of a heart attack before getting halfway through that race. I remember when my boys were young.

Now, this is more a thing for boys. It's not quite the same for my daughter. Boys boast of their strength.

Girls are different. Girls bat their eyes. They get this lyrical tone in their voice and they get anything they want.

I remember my wife, Theresa, used to say to me, Oh, I don't believe it. You know how she got a new bicycle out of you. And I would say, Well, the old one had a scratch on it.

She told me that she was right. But boys boast. Now, I don't remember the exact scenarios.

But they go something like this. I remember on the farm that I used to have to bale hay, about 2,000 bales a year. We'd have to put on a hay wagon and take it into the barn.

We used to fence most of the farm by hand because they didn't have a tractor in the beginning. And I remember the boys when they were about three years old and five years old. And a fresh cedar fence post normally could weigh anywhere from 30 to maybe 45 pounds.

It would be on the ground. And my boys would come and say, Dad, out of the way. I can lift this.

I can put this on the wagon or on the back of the truck by myself. And I'd say, Oh, all right. No, I don't need your help, Dad.

I can do this all by myself. So I'd step out of the way. This is a ritual that goes on all the time with little boys.

And they get down and they grab that thing and they grunt and they groan and they grunt and they groan. And they give it their best. And some of you, they got little kids, you know what this is all about.

And they struggle and struggle and struggle. And typically they finally collapse on top of the fence post. They just give up and they fall on it or they fall in the grass.

They're absolutely exhausted. And then you look down at them and say, Could you not lift it an inch off the ground? I thought you were. I thought you were so strong.

Do you need help? Do you need someone bigger than you are to lift it for you? You see, this is the issue. Peter made this incredible boast and the rest followed him and made this incredible boast of their natural strength and how they were going to walk with God and how they would not deny him. But this is without possessing the inward life of God that was about to be given to them through the death of Christ and the resurrection.

The power of the Holy Ghost had not yet come. And Jesus comes out from praying with his father and looks at Peter and it's in the context of his boast. And he says, What, could you not watch with me one

hour? I thought you were going to go all the way as it is to Calvary.

I thought you were going to die. You can't. You were going to go with me and you're going to die with me, but you can't even watch for one hour.

That's the context of what Jesus is speaking to him. He's not condemning him. He's trying to bring him to an understanding of his own frailty, his own inability, his own need of a resource within himself much greater than anything in his natural ability that he can muster.

And folks, that is where the church... When David says we didn't seek him after the due order, that's why so many people fail and fall and become discouraged. Because they read the Scriptures and then sit out in their own power to make it a reality. But we are incapable of making it a reality.

I can't love anybody the way God wants me to love them. I can't forgive a single soul the way Christ wants me to forgive. The burden is too heavy.

I can't do it. That's why Jesus said, Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you.

Come, learn of me. I'm meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your soul. Oh, thank God for this incredible life of Christ that he's willing to give to all who place their trust in him.

As Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost, so we too are raised out of the weakness of death and brought into the power of an endless life. So we too are given strength beyond our natural strength, an ability far beyond any natural ability that you and I will ever possess. And we come to the place where our testimony is like the Apostle Paul.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I can be a loving man. I can forgive my enemies.

I can go beyond the limits of this natural body and this natural mind. I can be brought to places where I could never have gone in my own strength. You see, this is where the Scripture begins to make sense.

When the Bible tells us it's a faithful saying, If we die with him, we'll also live with him. If we give up as it is, our own will. If we yield our own strength, or so we think it is, and begin to realize it for the weakness it is.

Trust in Christ for our salvation. Allow the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon us. And God's life becomes our life.

And all of a sudden, things that were so heavy are now within the realm of possibility to accomplish, because his life is within us. The end of the verse, that chapter that we read today, I used to always wonder about this verse. In verse 43 it says, He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

And I want to tell you something. When your eyes are focused on yourself, they're always going to be heavy. You're always going to be discouraged.

You're going to go home at night and look in the mirror, and you're going to feel like a failure. You go to your knees, you can't even pray. You get up in the morning, you have no joy.

Because your eyes are all focused in the wrong place. You're looking at your own strength, and you're looking for some resource in yourself to even live as a Christian, and it isn't there, beloved. It is not there apart from Christ.

We cannot do it. Now, in verse 45, it says, He came to His disciples and said to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest. I used to look at that as if they were completely defeated.

This was an indictment as it is against them. Sleep on now. You came, I needed your help, you couldn't give it to me, now go ahead and just sleep.

But you know, folks, that's really not the context of this verse. I believe what Christ is saying, Alright now, fellows, put your human effort to rest. You've tried and you've realized you can't do this.

So, put it to rest. Put it aside. You see, because help is on the way.

Hallelujah. Go with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 3. Folks, help is on the way. There's so many people here today, you're trying so hard, and you're walking with your, you got your teeth gritted, and you're doing it as hard as you can, and you're getting so fed up and your eyes are so heavy.

Jesus says you do not sleep on. You're never going to accomplish it in your own strength. Put this human effort away.

You see, the walk with Christ is a walk of faith. It's not that we don't do something, but we don't do it in our natural strength. We take the promises of God that He has given to us, we believe them, and trust that the life of Christ in us through the Holy Spirit will make these promises a reality.

That God will lift us, and God will take us where He is asking us to go. Now, in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 17, Paul says it this way, Now, the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Now, the word liberty in the Greek means generosity.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is generosity. Now, remember, Jesus said when the Comforter comes, He's going to take what is mine, what I'm going to purchase for you as it is on Calvary, and He's going to show it to you. Everything that is mine is going to be yours.

Paul says where the Spirit of the Lord is. If the Spirit of God is within you, if you are truly a child of God, if you've been born again by the Spirit of God, you have within you now an incredible generosity of God. This incredible supply of life is now within you.

Do you understand this? If you don't understand this, forget trying to live the Christian life. You have this incredible supply in Christ that is given to you by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit within you. But we all, he says, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory, or that means the weightiness, the abundance as it is of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul is saying as we behold this incredible victory of Christ in the fullness of its weight and the fullness of its resources, we ask and we trust and we're changed into the very victory of new life which is in Christ, which we are looking at. As we see Him, as we comprehend His victory, as we see the weightiness of God's incredible mercy, as we see the incredible scope, Paul says, of His victory, we just simply look at it. We behold it in the Word of God and we believe it in our hearts.

We are changed into the same image of that inexhaustible strength and victory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. The Christian life is to be a supernatural life. It's to be a life that is lived by God inside of those who have made the choice to believe Him.

Verse 4, he says, Chapter 4, rather, verse 1, Therefore seeing we have received this ministry and have received mercy, we faith not. Here's the source of the Christian life and the source of our strength. The ministry and the mercy is Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Verse 2, he says, But we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully. Here's what I believe Paul is saying. We renounce this inner corruptible image of ourselves without Christ that we have.

We do not craftily and deceitfully deal with God telling Him we can even though God's Word says we can't and we won't. That's deceitful dealing with God. When you and I who bear the image of Christ walk away saying, No, I can do this.

No, you can't do this. Only Christ in you can win the victory. Only Christ in you can walk through that victory.

We do not craftily and deceitfully deal with the Word of God. That's exactly what Peter and the disciples were doing in Matthew 26. Jesus was telling them one thing and they were throwing in the name of religious zeal and determination and dedication as they saw it in themselves, they're throwing a contrary statement back in His face.

He was saying, You can't do this and they were saying, We can. Paul says, No, we have received this ministry. It is a ministry of mercy.

It keeps those who trust in Him. We renounce these hidden things of dishonesty. We do not walk in craftiness.

We do not handle the Word of God deceitfully. But by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This is what Paul is saying, But with truth in the power of the Holy Spirit now manifested in us, this truth that carries us, this truth that enables us, we stand as a warning to every man's conscience in this generation that he too who is without God is incapable of finishing the race.

We stand as a warning. Folks, you are to stand as a warning to this generation. The glory of God is to be in you.

You and I are to be so changed by this inward working of Christ. And our testimony is not how we did it. Our testimony is simply that we believe God who did it for us and does it in us and through us.

Therefore, we stand as a testimony to our generation. This testimony is simply that no man can change without the Spirit of God. No man can obey God unless God gives him the power to be obedient.

Now, I want to finish with John chapter 16. 16, please, if you'll turn back there with me. Oh, Jesus, thank you.

Hallelujah. No wonder Paul said, I fear lest your minds be converted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Some people are offended at the simplicity of Christ.

Jesus said it this way in verse 20, Verily I say to you, you shall weep and lament. Now, this is, of course, just prior to what we read in Matthew 26. But the world shall rejoice and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

In other words, the whole world at that time, of course, is going to rejoice that the Son of God is crucified and you're going to be sorrowful. But your sorrow is going to turn into joy. A woman, when she's in travail and sorrow because her hour has come, but as soon as she's delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world.

Now, he's telling his disciples there's going to be a time of great travail for you, but you're going to come through this travail with incredible joy and new life. And you now, therefore, have sorrow. But I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man will take from you.

I'm going to give you a joy that no one can take from you because, you see, it's not given by anything of this world. It's not given by any man. It doesn't come from natural strength.

It's a supernatural strength and a supernatural life and a supernatural joy. I'm going to give it to you. You're going to get up in the morning and say, God Almighty, I'm changing.

I'm changing. Lord, I'm loving that person that I work with at work. And I don't know how it happened, but I just asked You to do it.

And I'm putting one foot in front of the other. I'm believing You, God. And my heart is changing.

And there's a joy. Folks, the joy comes from understanding that I'm living in a supernatural life with Christ. His life is in me.

Oh, beloved, I feel sometimes like I could explode even just trying to explain this thing. It's Christ in us. It's not a concept about Christ.

It's not you and I trying to prove something to Christ. It's coming to one who has finished the work. He's finished our redemption.

He's overthrown our enemies. He's provided strength for our weakness and covering for our failure and joy for our sorrow. Everything you will ever want is in Jesus Christ.

It's all in Him. He says, I'm going to give you joy, verse 22, and no man will take it from you. Verse 23, and in that day you shall ask Me nothing.

Actually, the original text says it this way. You're not going to be confused anymore, if I can paraphrase it. You're not going to have any more questions.

You'll not be sort of like Gethsemane theology. You'll not be sitting there frustrated and trying to do all of these things in your own strength. You will no longer be in this frame of mind.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Now folks, you either believe that or you don't. You either believe it or you don't.

There's no middle ground on this. Jesus said it. It's in red letter.

Whatever you ask. Now we know in the New Testament we don't ask for things to consume them on our own lust or we'll not get them. But to be asking God for the power to love and the power to forgive and the power to stand and the power to preach and the power to teach and the power to publish and the power to defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not asking to consume it on our own lust.

He says, ask the Father in My name and He will give it to you. Verse 24, He says, Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name. And that's exactly what happened.

They were all there saying, We can, we will. We will not deny you. We will walk with you.

I can, I will. We can, we will. He said, Hitherto you have asked nothing in My name.

Ask and you shall receive that your joy might be full. Ask, you shall receive that your joy might be full. How do I get the victory? Ask, you shall receive that your joy might be full.

How do I become a man and woman in prayer? Ask, you shall receive that your joy might be full. How do I forgive people who have wronged me and abused me? Ask, you shall receive and your joy shall be full. How do I preach the Gospel in this generation? Where do I find the power? Ask, you shall receive and your joy shall be full.

Hallelujah! Thank God! Thank God that it's not humanly possible to live the Christian life. Thank God that the ground is level at the cross. Thank God that rich and poor and educated and uneducated and weak and strong can all come to the cross and the same life and the same power is available.

Thank God! Thank God! Thank God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Thank God! All you have to do is ask and believe and begin to walk in what God says and the Holy Spirit will make the promises of Christ a living reality within your life. And as Paul says, your life will become a commendation as it is of God to every man's conscience in this generation. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh, God help us! God help us! God help us! God help us to hear this! God help us! God help us! Hallelujah! This is not pie-in-the-sky Christianity.

This is reality. I've lived this. I've lived this.

Oh, God! Oh, God! We need a church again in this generation. We need a church. A Holy Spirit empowered church.

A church that stands before men and convinces them of sin and righteousness in the day of judgment. We need a church. We've lived under the Peter ministry for years now.

Seven steps to this and three steps to that and four ways to do this and five ways to accomplish that. It's all Peter, James and John theology before the cross. Oh, God! I know I've delivered your heart.

Lord, I know it. Oh, Jesus! I pray, Lord, for faith to arise. My God, let this be a house of faith.

Let this be a church of faith. I pray for an explosion of faith in this house. Oh, God, Lord, that we not just be a people embracing theories about You, but we have a living relationship with You.

My God, my God, take us out of weakness and mediocrity and self-effort. Bring us into the life of our Christ. Oh, Holy Spirit, I call to You tonight, just like Ezekiel called.

I pray, Holy Spirit, You come and breathe on us. You've got to come and take us into the life of our Christ. We need You, Holy Spirit.

We need Your strength. We need Your power. We need Your wisdom.

We need Your mind. We need Your ability. We need Your sustaining and carrying power.

We need Your supernatural life to be within us. Oh, Holy Spirit, come and breathe on us again. Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, God! Breathe on us! Breathe on us, Lord! Breathe on us, Holy Spirit! Guide us! Guide us again into the life of Christ! Almighty God! I lift up Your church all over this country! Oh, God! Oh, God! Breathe on Your church again! We're going to stand.

And as we do, I want to give an altar call for every failure in this house, every discouraged person, every person who has believed that some area of your life is impossible. But remember the words of Christ. With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Hallelujah! If you've got an area of impossibility in your life, I want you to get out of your seat. In the annex, you make your way here and we'll wait for you. Get out of your seat and come here.

We're going to pray. And we're going to send hell to flight tonight. Hallelujah! You are going to win the victory tonight.

It's not in natural strength. It's going to be in faith and the finished work done for you. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God! Oh, Jesus, thank You! God, thank You! Oh, take a moment tonight, will you? Jesus said, ask that your joy might be full.

I can't really do it for you. You've got to lift your voice. You've got to ask Him whatever it is you need.

If you're doing it for the glory of God, if you're a true child of God, if you need to be saved, ask Him. If you need your sins forgiven, ask Him. If you need strength, ask Him.

If you need power, ask Him. Ask Him. All you can do tonight is ask Him.

Oh, folks, the Holy Spirit is here. Truth has been spoken. All you have to do is ask Him.

Lift up your voice and just ask Him now. Ask Him. Do it now.

Just lift up your voice and ask Him. Whatever you need. Hallelujah! Hallelujah, Lord! You hear the cry of Your people tonight.

God, You hear every heart. You know, Lord, what the need of every life is. Lord, now You're giving victory, I believe at this very moment, over impossible situations.

You are the victory, Jesus. You are the One who is the light, the truth and the way. You are the open door.

You are the pasture the Scripture speaks about. It's all in You. It's all through You.

It's all about You, Jesus. Hallelujah, Lamb of God! Thank You, mighty God! Thank You, mighty God! Oh, God, thank You. Father, I pray tonight, Lord, that people have come to this altar, that they walk away here realizing they've had an encounter with a living and supernatural God.

Father, I thank You for this tonight. You will never fail. You will never deny.

You will never forsake those who put their trust in You. God, give us hearts to believe You. Pray with me tonight, Lord Jesus.

Take away my unbelief. Take away my own strength. Give me the ability to trust in Your victory and Your life that You are more than willing to give to me and to live through me.

I believe that I'm going to leave this altar a changed person because I have come to the God who created me and loved me and washed me clean in His own blood. Oh, God, do such a mighty work in me that people around will have to take notice through my life that You are alive. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh, give Him glory! Oh, give Him glory! Give Him glory!

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