

# When Will Jesus Come to Me?

by Carter Conlon

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of opening one's heart to God and trusting in His power to bring about a change in one's life.*

**Duration:** 30:35

**Scripture:** Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 24:27, Romans 3:23, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 4:12

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the question of how to obtain a new life in Christ. He refers to a conversation in Matthew chapter 24 where Jesus' followers ask about the signs of his coming and the end of the world. The speaker relates this to the longing for God to come and end the dissatisfaction and disappointment in one's life. He emphasizes that becoming a child of God brings about a transformation and the ability to break free from the confines of the old life. The speaker encourages relying on the Holy Spirit and not being deceived by false teachings or seeking God in the wrong places.

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## Transcript

Amazing. Father, I thank you, Lord, for these few moments to speak from your heart into somebody else's heart. I ask you for the grace tonight to reach people with deep questions who've come into this auditorium looking for God and looking for an answer.

Lord, you will answer, and you answer clearly if we want to hear you, and you will dissolve the mysteries of this life, and suddenly everything will become clear. I pray that for somebody tonight. I ask you, God, for the grace to reach into these dark, dark, dark questions, deep, confusing places, and to be able to bring light, and Father, I thank you for it in Jesus' name.

Let me just share with you a little bit from the scriptures, not exactly in the context of which it's written, but I want to look at this passage as a type of what's in somebody's mind tonight. I really feel the Lord's given me what I call a word of knowledge. Now, a word of knowledge is a spiritual gift that God gives to many to be able to understand what you're thinking, because God knows what you're thinking tonight.

Did you know that? He knows the questions you've had in your heart. He knows why you're here, and in his mercy, he wants to reach into the deepest areas where the mysteries, in a sense, of your life are not yet solved. You don't fully yet understand why you're here, where you're going.

Is this what life is all about? Is there anything more to life than this? And if there is, would somebody please stand up and show it to me? And tonight, you're getting an inkling of what can be in God, but yet still don't fully understand it. I was exactly where you are many, many years ago. I saw something in somebody, but it took me weeks to begin to understand what was it that I saw.

A friend told me about his wrongs that he had done in the past, how suddenly they were forgiven, and he didn't carry this wagon load of guilt around with him anymore. He told me about this new life that he had, and I was trying to understand, how do you get this new life? And in Matthew chapter 24, some of the followers of Jesus, as they sat with him in discussion, they asked a question. They said, what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world? It's a type, it's a shadow play of something that maybe you're thinking tonight, God, when will you come to me? And when will this nightmare of a life that I'm living end? This unsatisfying place that I have built, or somebody else built for me, or I find myself somehow just transported into this place that's been such a colossal disappointment to me.

I hate where I am. I hate what I'm becoming. I hate what people have spoken over my life, and I'm sick and tired of trying to find a way out.

So what will be the sign when you finally do come to me? And if you do, how do you do that? And if you finally do come to me, what will be the sign that this world that I'm living in now, this sphere I find myself in, will finally come to an end? You'd think that Jesus would answer it very directly. It will happen in 2014 and sometime in the month of March. But he actually says, take heed that no one deceives you.

For many will come in my name saying, I am Christ. In other words, you're going to have to fight through a lot of voices. Some of them come from inside, and some of them come from outside.

You heard it tonight in Victoria's testimony. If you just read more, if you just pray more, if you just fast more, and somehow we begin to think this is the voice of God. And there's something within us that has capacity to create something that sounds like the voice of God.

Or this must be the voice of God. It must be the leading of God. Or we'll go to friends, or maybe visit some place that declares itself to be somewhat of an ambassadorship of Jesus Christ on the earth.

And there'd be somebody there telling us something about God. But Jesus said, all of these voices are deceptive. They lead to more works.

They lead to more trying, to more failing. Just one iron door after another, one impossible place after another. And it just leads to an increase of sorrow in the heart.

So many in this generation would say, I tried God. I once knew God. I gave my best shot to walk with God, but I just overwhelmed by the temptations around me and the wars within me, fighting against this little squeak of a voice inside that says, I want God.

But there's this incredible, it's as if I'm surrounded by these mega speakers around me that are condemning me. And many shall arise and deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, he says, the love of many shall wax cold.

Because I would have tried so many times to change. I made a resolution almost every new year, lasted until about 1210. You know, you're half in the tank and you got your paper hat on your head, and 12 o'clock comes around, you sing Old Lang's sign.

I'm going to be a better father. I'm going to be a better husband. I'm going to be a better friend.

Lasts about 10 to 12 minutes, on average. And you wake up the next day saying, this is hopeless. And you even utter maybe a little prayer in your heart, God help me, because we don't even know how that happens.

That's why they said, what will be the sign when you do finally come? How will I know it's you? And when will this nightmare of a life end? When will I be able to be in a place that truly is new, that truly is what I believe in my heart deep down that God should be. If God's in a life, there should be a change. There should be something supernatural, shouldn't there? It shouldn't be something that I have to plow through in my own strength.

Finally, it comes to the point where Jesus says to them, if they say to you, he's in the desert, don't go there. And if they tell you he's in some secret place, don't believe it. In other words, come to the place where you realize there's nowhere else to go.

There's nothing else I can do. I'm tired of all the theories about God, and I'm tired of all the lies that are coming out of my own heart. I'm tired of all the human effort to be holy or to change.

And so I'm going to do something. I'm just going to stand still. And if God is God, he's going to have to come to me.

And then Jesus says these words, as the lightning comes out of the East and shines even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the son of man be. Oh, I thank God. All the New Year's resolutions, all the attempts to change, all of the good human effort to be a better person, a better friend, a better father, to do better, to do right.

Finally, in May 12th, 1978, I pulled over in the side of the road and I prayed a prayer and I said, oh Jesus, if what my friend, his name was Irv, if what Irv is telling me is the truth, I open my heart to you and I invite you into my life to be my Lord and my savior. And I didn't do anything at that moment. I just, I didn't feel anything.

I'd put my car and drive. I went to work. I worked my regular shift all night, came home and slept.

And later on that day, the next day I got up and I've said it here probably 150 times. I'll never get tired of saying it, but I know the moment I woke up, I remember the moment as if it was five minutes ago that I rolled out of bed and it was at the moment my feet touched the floor, I knew I was a different man. As the lightning comes out of the East, even unto the West, the suddenness of God's coming, the suddenness of his power, his willingness to remove our sins, the Bible says as far as the West is from the East, the light that comes with the presence of God, where suddenly darkness is dissipated.

That's the one thing about lightning. It comes and it lights up a darkened sky. It sends fear into all of our enemies.

And suddenly there's a change in the heart. When we finally open our hearts and say, I can't change myself. I can't figure it out.

I don't know how to be holy. And I've given up trying. I'm not going to any more meetings.

When people say he's over on fifth Avenue, he's over down in the Bronx, he's over in Queens. I don't care. I'm not going there anymore.

Lord, you have to come to me. And so I opened my heart to you. And when we open our heart to Jesus Christ, we find that he has been waiting for that moment all along.

As lightning signs out of the East and to the West, he comes into the human heart. He takes up his residency inside of us and darkness has turned into light. The spirit of God takes up residency inside of these earthen vessels, these human vessels, and we couldn't come to God.

So God comes to us. It's truly amazing. It's what it means to be born again, not by human effort, not by secondary human effort, but by the spirit of almighty God.

When you and I recognize that Jesus Christ, the son of God went to a cross and was nailed there and viciously beaten and rejected. And the wrath of all of what sin, what we deserve for our sin was poured out on him. And he did it all to set us free from the penalty, the power, the darkness, the hardness, the pain, the wounding, the hopelessness of sin.

He broke it. And the Bible says he blotted out all of our past, everything that was against us and gave us a chance by the power of God within us to start brand new in life, to be born again by the spirit of God. And he said, I'll give you a new heart.

I'll give you a new mind. I'll give you a new spirit. It's amazing what a journey this has been in just 36 years in my life.

It's been an incredible journey. It's as if, if I had a picture, I don't have any pictures. Thank God my house burned down and all those pictures are gone before I got saved.

But if I had a picture, I remember one time I looked at one and it actually scared me to look into my own eyes of the kind of a man I used to be. And I remember looking and said, that man died. That man on May 12th, 1978, that man died.

That man who made new year's resolutions and couldn't keep them. That man who tried everything he knew to be a good person and couldn't do it. Who tried to be kind, but he was selfish to the core of his being.

That man who couldn't change himself died and a new man was born and it happened quickly. Not by something I was able to do, I was able to do nothing. But by finally just pulling over on the side of the road and saying, I can't do this technically.

It doesn't matter how many days I go to church. It doesn't matter how many candles I light and how many prayers I try to pray and how many good deeds I think I'm going to do and how many passages of scripture that I don't even understand that I try to memorize. I can't change myself.

So I simply pulled over on the side of the road and said, if this is true, oh God, I open my heart and I ask you to come into my life and save me. And he came. It wasn't a prayer of great faith.

It was an if, but it was a sincere if. It was good enough for God and he came and he came suddenly and he came on his own and he came without me even knowing it until the next day. It's amazing.

It's like I was struck by lightning and I wasn't aware of it until 24 hours later. That's what salvation for me was like. It's amazing.

Some people it happens that way, other people it's more of a gradual thing, but for me it was the suddenness of his coming after all the questions and all the trying and the 24 years of confusion and this never ending spiral down into hopelessness. The mixed whiskey that was now starting to become straight whiskey. The marginal anger that was starting to become violent anger.

All of these things. Sin, when it gets a hold, it grows and you can't make it go away through any amount of human effort. You can't change anything of yourself.

You're still the same person. I used to work out before I got saved and even after for a little while, quite a few hours in the day and people would come in thinking that if I build my body, it's going to change me. It doesn't change anything.

I used to say, I've said it before, a lot of these guys that really get into heavy bodybuilding are really fearful inside and so they're little skinny guys, little skinny fearful guys when they come in and when they're done, they're big fearful guys. You can only change the outside. You can't change the inside.

Be still and know that I'm God. He says, you don't have to do anything. It was done for you.

On a cross 2000 years ago, everything that needed to be done to pay the price was done for the wrong that we have done. Everything that needed to be done to pave the way so that God could come to us and live inside of us and change us and call us his own was done 2000 years ago on a cross. There's nothing you and I can add to that except one thing, a heart that says, thank you and Jesus, thank you for dying for me.

So now from this day forward, I make the choice to live for you. Come to me, oh God. And the scripture says, as the lightning comes out of the East, even to the West, so shall the coming of the son of man be.

It's not a gradual thing, salvation. It's an instantaneous moment where God and you meet. You may not even be fully aware of it, but you will eventually.

In my case, it took 24 hours and yours, it might be less, but I began to realize Christ has come to me. Jesus Christ lives inside of me. I began to change.

A friend of mine who's dead now, he used to preach the gospel. He's a great soldier for Christ. Got saved in Houston.

BH Clendenin was his name and he got saved in Houston and he was working as a foreman on an oil rig. And he found a guy sleeping on his watch at night, a night watchman. And he said, he reached out and he slugged him and knocked him cold right out of his chair, right onto the platform.

And he said, I looked at him and I was standing there with my fists clenched and I felt bad. And he says, the first time in my life I ever felt bad about doing something like that. And I knew I was saved.

So it's, it's little by little, it's line by line, we begin to change. And there's evidence, we know, we know that we've become the children of God. Now that man, that same drive that caused him to do that was going to send them all over the world, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ into prisons in some of the worst areas in the world.

That same drive was going to be channeled by the spirit of God and brought into something of incredible life. It's a marvelous life to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a marvelous life to finally break out of this old city as it is, break out of these old walls, break out of these old confining places that society and the world and culture and history and everything else have told us that are more or less, our present is going to become our future.

It's wonderful to be able to break out of these places and finally say, Lord, you've come and it's the end of the world as I've known it. It's the end of this, these borders around me, these walls that have been built around me. And it's the beginning of what you have for my life, not just for the rest of time, but in through eternity.

This is not a game. Peter, the apostle said, we've not followed some cleverly devised plan out of the minds of men. No, this is real.

This is more real than breathing itself. It's more real than this theater you're sitting in tonight because this thing will be dissolved, but the salvation that God offers will go on for eternity. The David, the King of Israel, the sweet Psalmist said, oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.

I can't make you taste. I can bring you to the border. I can show you the menu that's here for you, but you have to taste it for yourself.

You've got to open your heart and say, Lord, if this is true, if all you can work up tonight is an, if God will receive that, if it's an sincere, if, if it's true, God, if what these young ladies have shared tonight, if the songs we've sung are real, if this preacher is not full of hot air, but there's actually something in him tonight that can make a difference in my life. If it's really true, God, then I opened my heart to it. And I asked you to come and touch my life.

You see, I have enough confidence in my heart to know that God himself will prove to you that this is true. I don't have to prove it to you. God will prove it to you as much as he proved it to me and prove it to you.

If any man being Christ, he's a new creation. The old things in his life pass away and behold, all things become new, not by human effort, not by might, but by the spirit of God within us. We begin to change from the inside out.

And that's how you begin to know that God is real and creates something in the heart that says, Oh God, would you just make me into the person that you intended me to be before sin got a hold of my life? Would you give me the power to walk away from what is wrong and embrace what is right? Would you lead me on a path that will bring honor to your name and help to people around me? That will be the sign that he's come to you. You will change, but I can't do it for you. And God will never force himself upon anybody here.

He is an absolute gentleman. Even in the last book of the Bible, it says in one of his churches, he says, I stand at the door and knock. He knocks at the door of that, which he created the absolute gentleman.

He stands at the door of your heart tonight. So won't you just open and let me come into your heart. Won't you just let me be the God of your life.

You have everything to gain and absolutely nothing to lose. If that's you this evening, and you've come to the same place that I came to 36 years ago, and you're just able to say, Jesus, I don't get all of this, but if

it's true, oh God, if you do save those who come to you from sin, if you do promise that when we die, we go to heaven, because we've trusted in you. And if you do make my life into that, which you have destined it to be, if this is true, then I want to open my heart to you.

And I want to invite you into my life to be my God, my Lord, and my savior. If that's you this evening, would you just join with me and raise your hand wherever you are? God bless you. Thank you.

Up in the balcony. Thank you. God bless you.

You will never, ever regret this decision. Now I want to open the front of this auditorium tonight, and I want to ask you to do something. I think it's important to do this publicly.

I'm going to ask you to get out of your seat and come to the front of this auditorium. Then after you do, I'm going to lead you in a prayer. And it's to be a prayer very much like I prayed 36 years ago, where you open your heart and believe that God hears the sincerity of your heart.

And Jesus will forgive your sin and come into your life. We're going to stand and you can join this young couple that are coming now already. Everyone who raised their hand and those who should have raised your hand.

Thank God. Let's stand together, please. Those who did raise their hand and those who should have, please just come quickly.

Make your way down here. And we're going to pray together. We're going to believe God for a miracle in your life.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

Thank you, Jesus. Go to either exit in the balcony. If you brought somebody with you tonight, please just turn to your friend and say, if you want to go out, I'll go down with you so you don't have to go alone.

Do that. Talk to the person beside you. Folks, this is really important.

We're talking about the difference between life and death here tonight. Jesus said, I've come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly. Hallelujah.

Just keep coming, please. Just keep coming. Join those that have already come.

We'll sing just for a moment. Then we're going to pray. Now, listen to me carefully, those that have come tonight.

You don't have to beg somebody who died for you to come to you. You have to understand that about Jesus. He so loved you that he came to this world and he suffered what he did because he wanted you back again.

You don't have to beg him to do what he died for. He's not back in heaven with his arms folded, waiting for you to hit the right chorus and do the right things. No, he came to us because we needed a savior.

We couldn't make it to heaven on our own. It was hopeless for all of us. Some of us look like we might have handled it better than others have, but we've all sinned, the Bible says.

We've all fallen short of what we should be in God. When he comes, he comes and he transforms us from the inside out. That's who God is.

That's what he does. He's written a book to us. In this book, in the New Testament, are all kinds of promises from him.

Each word has the power to create a universe. It's amazing. He just speaks and he creates.

Each promise here has the power to create in you, just as he created the universe by his spoken word. He's got the power to create what's not there anymore, what was lost through experience. He has the power to give it back.

He has all power. When you and I begin to believe his promises, we begin to change, not by human effort, but by his Holy Spirit inside of us. It's like a balloon filled with helium.

You don't have to tell it to rise. It rises because of what's inside of it. When God's Holy Spirit is in us, we're given the power by God himself to change and become conformed to that which God says we should be.

And it's an awesome thing what God does in us. You don't have to do this week after week after week. It's like when you were born.

You don't have to go back to the hospital every week to be born again. When you open your heart, he comes. And you don't have to come back next week because, well, maybe I just didn't get it right.

Maybe the intonation of my voice wasn't correct, or maybe I wasn't passionate enough, and so I'll come back to the altar next week and try it again. No, when you ask him, he comes. He's already at the door.

When you open the door, he comes in. And it takes a while to recognize who he is. It takes a while to let him be who he is.

But old things do pass away. Oh, thank God. The shame of our past and the struggles of our present and the hopelessness of our future, in some cases, it all passes away.

Yeah, the memories will be there, but they don't have the power to destroy you anymore. It's amazing what God does. What incredible life it is to live for him and let him live in us.

I'm going to lead you in a prayer, and I want you to believe that as you pray this prayer, that God hears it and he responds to it. I'm just helping you to pray the words that you need to pray so that Jesus will come in. Now, let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me, for giving your life for me, because you wanted me. You love me. Tonight, I open my heart to you, and I ask you to come into my life and to be my God from this day forward.

I don't have much strength, but you didn't ask me to have strength. You simply asked me to let you come in to my life. And so tonight, I believe with all my heart that you are coming into my life and that you will save me from the power of wrong and the penalty of sin.

And you'll give me a new life, a new heart, a new mind, new strength, and a new future. I believe this. I believe it with all my heart tonight.

Thank you for dying for me, for paying the price for all the wrong that I've done. I want to live a new life, the life you have for me, as you describe it in the words you've left me. Help me to grow in my understanding of you.

Give me the strength not to turn back, but to keep going forward. I thank you tonight for the understanding that when I die, heaven and not hell will be my home. Not because of what I've done, but because of what you did for me when you died for my sin.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, tonight, I am your child and you are my God. I will walk with you for the rest of my life. Help me never to turn back from you.

I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah.

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