

# Why Do Preachers Lie?

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon explores the reasons behind preachers' lies and the importance of discerning truth in a world filled with falsehoods.*

**Duration:** 44:23

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 18:18, Jeremiah 23:21-22, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 23:6-8, John 3:16, John 8:32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Corinthians 10:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Deception", "Genuine Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the dangers of preachers lying and the consequences of not heeding the true voice of God. It contrasts the fate of two kings, one who pretended strength but was fatally wounded due to ignoring God's voice, and another who cried out for help and was delivered. The message emphasizes the importance of seeking truth, repentance, and genuine surrender to God for victory and strength in the midst of life's battles.

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## Transcript

I want you to turn with me to 2 Chronicles chapter 18, please, if you will. I was really torn as to what kind of a title to give this, but I've ended up calling it Why Do Preachers Lie? Why Do Preachers Lie? Now, Father, I ask you for the touch of heaven. Oh, God, help me, Lord, to speak this word.

Expand the borders of my mind and my heart. Give me a heart, Lord, for the people that are going to hear your word this morning, and for the preachers even that we're going to be speaking about today. I pray, God, that I not stand as any man's judge.

Help me, God, to reach those that profess to preach the gospel in this generation who have fallen by the wayside for whatever reason and have opened their hearts to something that they will deeply regret for eternity. I pray, God, that in this church we'll be servants to the body of Christ and bridge builders, not destroyers. And so it's in this spirit I ask you for the grace to speak this message.

I'm only doing this in obedience to you, God, so I'm asking in Jesus' name that there be great fruit born in our hearts and that we be a kind people in the days ahead. And I ask it in Jesus' name. Why do preachers lie? 2 Corinthians chapter 18, 2 Chronicles, rather.

That would not be good if I was reading from... 2 Chronicles chapter 18, beginning at verse 18. Then Micaiah said, Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the hosts of

heaven standing on his right hand and on his left.

And the Lord said, Who will persuade Ahab, king of Israel, to go up that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead? So one spoke in this manner and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, I will persuade him. The Lord said to him, In what way? So he said, I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

And the Lord said, You shall persuade him and also prevail. Go out and do so. Therefore, look, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you.

Then Zedekiah, the son of Chana, went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, Which way did the spirit from the Lord go from me to speak to you? And Micaiah said, Indeed, you shall see on that day when you shall go into an inner chamber to hide. Then the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah and return him to Ammon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son. And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in prison and feed him with the bread of affliction and water of affliction until I return in peace.

But Micaiah said, If you ever return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. And he said, Take heed, all you people. Now verse 33.

Now a certain man drew a bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded. The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening.

And about the time of sunset, he died. Now I know this is an Old Testament story, but it is relevant to you and I today. For Paul says in the book of 1 Corinthians in chapter 10 that all of these things that happened to God's people in the Old Testament were messages to us upon whom the ends of the world have come.

And they're there for our instruction. In the Old Testament, they were living at a time when battle was ahead of them. And the battle that they were considering entering into, they were going to lose.

There was no strength in them. They weren't walking in truth. There was a king of Israel called Ahab, and he was a man who had come to the point where his ears were now closed.

God couldn't speak to him. He had had sporadic minor awakenings along the way, but ultimately he would always cower down and go back to a lie, even though he knew somewhat what the truth was. But he had come to the point now where he was so mixed that truth could no longer be spoken to this man.

Tragically, I've seen that in my lifetime. I've seen people live in mixture. I've had them sit before me, and a darkness had come into their minds, and they could not be reached with truth anymore.

It's a scary thing when you see that. When the Bible talks in the book of Romans chapter 1 of handling the truth of God unrighteously, not holding to it, not embracing it, not letting the truth of God begin to challenge and change our hearts, and God then releasing that type of a person to what their heart really wants, and they end up with a twisted view of God. And even though you read clearly Scripture, they can't hear it anymore.

They can't see it, can't embrace it, can't understand it. It is a fearful thing to see people who have come into that kind of a place. There was another kind of a man, the king of another portion of a divided Israel.

His name was Jehoshaphat. He was a good man. The Scripture declares him to be so.

But he was a mixed man. He had a love of truth, but he also had a love of wandering into that which wasn't truth. There are people here like that today.

You come to this church on Sunday morning and maybe Tuesday night or some other night because you do recognize in your heart that truth is spoken here. But there's still another kind of a message you still gravitate to. You've still got tapes in your house you shouldn't have there, and DVDs and CDs, and you still listen on television to things you shouldn't listen to.

You come to one place, as Jehoshaphat did, because you instinctively know truth, but then you go to another, hoping that somehow maybe there's some truth over here that I haven't considered yet. And so here are these men thinking about going into a battle. Ahab wants to go and fight against this particular king that's invaded or at least threatening his nation.

And he's got this other man with him. He says, Let's go into battle. And Jehoshaphat says, I am as you are.

My armies are as your armies. We're brothers. We're going to go in this together.

Now let's bring us some prophets to stand before us and to confirm the direction we feel to go in. And so Ahab had 400 prophets that spoke to him. Can you imagine? 400.

They all come into this court where the two kings are. Their armies are making ready, most likely on the outside. And they say, Give us a word from the Lord.

And all of the prophets, every one of them, Micaiah saw it. He was the only voice left that was trying to tell this king Ahab and Jehoshaphat the course you're on is going to lead to your death. You're going to be defeated on this course.

But nobody will listen. They're in a frenzy now. Everything is on the up and up.

Everything's bigger and better. And they're putting on quite a display. False prophets can be exciting, you know.

Oh my goodness sakes, man. They're building horns of iron and they're putting on a skit saying with these you're going to push the king of Syria into the sea. And all, one is building upon, nobody's hearing from God at all.

But one is building upon another. They're borrowing their messages. If they had the internet, they'd all be on the internet.

Clickety-clickety-click, waiting for their turn. Who's saying what now? And how can I add another paragraph to it? And 400 of them. This thing must have gone on all day.

All day. Confirming a direction that is destined for defeat. But Jehoshaphat is a righteous man.

The Bible declares him to be so. He had a weakness for mixture, but he was still a righteous man. And you imagine how incredulous Ahab must have been when Jehoshaphat, after 400 prophets have told him, go and prosper.

You're going to be victorious. Be your best you and your chariot. This is going to be incredible today.

You're going to come home in victory. People are going to dance all around you. Everybody be telling them some little embellishment to the last person who'd spoken.

400 of them. You imagine how tall this tale must have gotten by the end of the afternoon. And then Jehoshaphat turns to Ahab and says, Is there anybody else? Ahab says, There's only one more, but I hate him.

Because he never tells me the truth the way I want to hear it. So they send for Micaiah, and the person who was the ambassador sent to get him and said, Micaiah, for goodness sakes, for once in your life, there's 400 prophets all saying one thing. Two kings are about to take the nation of Israel into battle.

Would you please, just for once in your life, agree with everybody else? Micaiah says, I can only speak what God gives me. Then the most marvelous thing happens. Micaiah comes into the king's court.

He looks at the entourage, and he can feel the lying spirit in the room. And he knows that Ahab is already bent on going into this battle. Jehoshaphat's going to go with him.

He knows they're not going to listen to him. And so finally Ahab says, Do you have a word from the Lord for me? Micaiah says, Go, prosper. He said the same thing as the other 400.

And then Ahab looks at him and says, How many times have I told you not to lie to me, but tell me the truth? Isn't that amazing? Then he quotes what I read in the opening text. He said, I saw a lying spirit come down and touch the mouths of these that are supposed to be your spiritual leaders, and you are destined for defeat. The next thing Micaiah has to endure is a slap in the face, and that's always what will come from the religious community to those who stand for truth.

In a perilous time, there will always be a violent reaction from those who are not speaking for God. 400 voices. And the question that comes to us is, what opened the hearts of these spiritual leaders to lies? You have to assume that some of them may have been called at one time.

Most were religionists. Religion was just a good idea, and they just got involved in it. And aspiring to be seen, aspiring to be known, they got into leadership roles.

That happens in every church age. But there's something that opened their hearts to lies, especially when it's evident that perilous times are just before them. And you see, that's why it's so important.

You better know who you're listening to, my friend. You better be careful, because we are living in perilous days right now. There is darkness on the horizon.

I don't know the full measure of what it's going to look like. It could be worse than anything we've ever anticipated in our lifetime, for all we know. I don't know that for a certainty, but I do know that, as Paul said to Timothy, perilous times have come.

This is a difficult hour we're living in. And you and I had better be careful. It's no longer optional for you to play the religious lottery and hope it works out okay.

You better know that who you're listening to is speaking for God. Make up your mind. Now, what opens the hearts of leaders to lies? Firstly, their hearts are open to it when they have an unsundered inner

longing for prestige and power.

Matthew 23, 6, it says, they love the best seats at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues. I had occasion several years ago to be in Washington. I was invited there by our former president before our present one to talk about some social and charitable issues.

There were 60 pastors there. I was shocked at the behavior of many of these, not all, but many of these men of God. Their behavior was shocking.

The disregard of authority, any authority but their own. I remember going into the White House, getting a special tour, and the agent speaking on behalf of the president said, please, because we're in a time of difficulty in our nation, we would appreciate no pictures. As soon as the agents left, they were lining up to take pictures of one another.

Absolute disobedience to authority. Fought for the front seats when the president came in, and I watched pastors literally push women out of the way to get closer to the president. It was embarrassing to be there.

I was embarrassed, honestly, to be associated with some that were in this group, seemingly representing the biggest ministries in the country. Their hearts are open to lies when there's an inner longing for prestige and power. Their hearts are open to lies when they love and need the praise and admiration of men.

Jesus said of the false religionists in his day, in Matthew 23, 7, they loved greetings in the marketplaces, and they loved to be called by men, rabbi, rabbi, teacher, teacher. They loved it. Folks, you better hope that I love God more than I love you.

I speak that for all the pastors of this church, because if I love you more than I love God, my heart will be open to something of deception. I have to be willing to challenge you. I have to be willing to do it lovingly.

I have to be willing to stand here. When even my own flesh doesn't want to do it, I have to be willing in obedience to God, because I'm not fighting for your admiration. I'm fighting for your soul.

I'm fighting for your families, fighting for your future. You might get mad at me and walk out today and say I'm never going back there, but as long as I see you at the gate of heaven when I get there, I'm happy about that. Thank God for that.

Preachers' hearts are open to lies when they're not called of God. We're living in a generation like that. I spoke at a pastor's conference a few years ago, and God gave me an unusual message.

I spoke to the pastors who were dried, disillusioned, disaffected, had never heard from God, don't get a living word. I said, many of you got into ministry because it was a good idea. It was in a peace time, and when you graduated from school, it was all just what Bible college are you going to? When you graduated from Bible college, it was what church are you going to pastor? And you never really thought about whether or not you're actually called of God.

It was just a good idea, and you went. But you don't get a word. You don't get a message.

You're constantly frustrated. I said, for the sake of the kingdom of God, have the courage to admit that you're not called of God if you aren't. It was the most unusual pastor's message I'd ever preached in my lifetime.

But I gave an altar call. It was filled with weeping men, many of whom in their hearts were saying, finally, somebody said it, what I've been thinking all along. I think I missed it.

I think I took a wrong turn somewhere. It was a good idea, but it wasn't God's idea. Jeremiah chapter 23, verses 21 and 22, God said to the prophet, I've not sent these prophets, yet they ran.

I've not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, if they had caused my people to hear my words, they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. If they had stood in my presence, they would have challenged every behavior that was taking them away from the life that is promised, not just eternally, but on earth, that abundant life that Jesus Christ spoke about.

Preachers lie when people want them to. Jeremiah 5, 30 and 31, the prophet says, an astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land. The prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests were ruled by their means.

That means that they're leading in the flesh, and my people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end? In other words, what will you do when the battle comes and God is not with you? What will you do when the days get dark and you don't have light, oil in your lamp, you don't have light to stand? I warn every preacher that ever steps in this pulpit, every guest speaker we have, do not be drawn by the applause of the people. If you let yourself be drawn, you'll end up preaching exactly what they want you to.

Now, thank God, I'm not suggesting you don't take moments when messages are preached and agree, but a preacher must not ever be drawn by the praise or the applause of man, or we will all end up preaching exactly what you want to hear. Preachers lie when they live to preserve themselves. Jesus said in John 10, I'm the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep, but a hireling, one who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.

The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. Sheep are just cordwood to be counted. The sheep are just something so he can go to a conference and say, I want to tell you how big my church is.

That's all the sheep are to many, the people of God. Pastors must never live to preserve themselves. You pray that God help us.

You pray if you're visiting today, God help your pastor. If you're listening online, not to live to preserve himself or herself. Pastors lie when they live secretly defeated lives.

They can't see a way out, and they begin to preach peace, compassion, inclusion, tolerance, to make their own inner defeat more acceptable. Jeremiah 6, 14 says, they say peace, peace, when there is no peace. Matthew 15, 14, Jesus calls them blind guides, and they lead both themselves and those who follow them into a ditch.

I want to encourage any pastors that might be listening to me. There is victory for you. There's victory for you in your private life.

There's victory for you in that place that nobody else sees, even in your despair and discouragement, depression, whatever it is you struggle with. There's victory for you. Don't live a defeated life, because if

you do, you'll end up preaching that defeat to others and beginning to pretend it's victory.

Now, contrast this to the New Testament. Paul, the apostle, was a genuine shepherd of God. I want you to listen to his words.

Remember, he told the New Testament church, I love you, though it seems the more I love you, the less I'll be loved. He had a heart for God's people, and every true ambassador of Christ has that heart in them, a heart for you, a heart to see you stand, a heart to see you grow, a heart to see you become everything that God's destined you to be, a heart to see you free from captivity, free from besetting sin, free from despair, free from fears about the future, free from the constant grinding of the past and the lies of the devil telling you you'll never amount to anything. A true pastor of God has a heart to see you free, because Jesus said, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

We're to be a free people. I've never been willing to pretend that I'm free. I've never been willing to play a game in my own life.

You either are free or you aren't. We don't have to pretend a game and play with God. Thank God the cross did buy our freedom.

The blood of Jesus Christ did defeat our enemies. Now Paul is speaking to the Corinthian believers in the context of people, I'm going to read a scripture to you, but he's speaking in the context of those who believe that they can have heaven and continue in certain behaviors, certain lifestyles, certain ways of thinking. Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, beginning at verse 9, he says, Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.

In other words, if you continue in certain practices, heaven is not your home, no matter what preacher tells you it is. And there will be all kinds of compromise in this generation. Pastors are going to buckle under the pressures of this time.

And as Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue is raised and the music begins to play, they will bend their knee to it. They will redefine holiness. They will redefine salvation.

You better be careful who you're listening to. Paul said, Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, that's sexual relationships outside of the bonds of marriage between a man and a woman.

That's fornication. So make up your mind. You either stop fornicating or get married.

Make up your mind, folks. Some are sitting here today saying, Wow, man, he's tough on us this morning. Well, you have to understand, I bear responsibility for you before God.

I stand before God today, and I answer for every one of your faces here this morning. I answer for you. There's a list going to be presented to me, and I will have to answer for you.

What did you do under the word that God gave me? How did I present Christ to you? Was I honest with you? Did I encourage you to walk with God? Did I present a full balance before you so you would actually see the benefit of walking away from sin and walking into the life that God has for you? Nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals. Now it talks about they practicing homosexual. Nor sodomites, nor thieves.

That's male prostitutes. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived, Paul says.

Don't let any preacher deceive you. Don't let anybody stand there with horns of iron saying it's going to be well, go and prosper. Don't let them deceive you.

Then Paul goes on and says, And such were some of you. But now you're awash, now you are sanctified. That means you're given the power of God's Holy Spirit to be the person that God designed you to be.

Now you've been given power. Now you're justified. In other words, yes, you will fall.

Yes, you will fail. But the true believer in Christ wants to live that full measure that God has revealed to them through the Scriptures. And when you fall, you're justified because your heart is right before God.

You say, God, forgive me. I don't want to do this. I don't want to live this way.

I don't want to speak this way. I don't want to think this way. And while you are fighting that fight, the Bible declares you justified.

Covered. Covered in your failure. Covered in your struggle because you know and God knows you're not playing a game.

You're moving towards walking in the truth of God. And you're sanctified. All your life you're going to be changing from image to image and glory to glory even as by the Spirit of God.

Yes, you have struggles today, but those struggles in your life will start losing their power. Their fuel source was put to death at the cross of Jesus Christ, and you will begin to change. So don't lose heart in this battle and don't start listening to somebody that tries to tell you, oh, no, just go ahead.

Live this way. Everything's going to be fine when you get to the end. That's what they were telling Ahab in Jehoshaphat, 400 of them.

It's going to be well with you, Ahab. There's going to be victory at the end. You're going to come back to a parade.

It's going to be awesome. How are you going to glorify God in this battle? You say, I'm not a true shepherd if I let you continue in sin that will ultimately destroy your soul. It doesn't matter how I can sing.

It doesn't matter how nice I might look or not look. None of it matters. If I let you continue in sin and you end up in hell, I'm not a shepherd.

Remember one time when we had sheep back on the farm in Canada? My wife loves to tell this story, but she came in the barn one day, and I had a knife out, and I was sharpening it, and I was cutting the nose of a sheep open. And she looked at me and said, why are you doing that? Poor sheep is sitting on its haunches and looking at me, and they're so trusting. And I'm cutting its nose open with a very, very sharp knife, and a septic.

I said, because there's a bug that's gotten under the skin of its nose. There's a specific name for this bug, and if I don't cut it out, it multiplies, goes under the skin, into the sinuses and things, and eventually will drive the sheep mad. It will start running full speed into walls, and it will ultimately kill itself, be driven insane.

And it looks so small. It's only one bug. It's only one little thing.

You know, a false shepherd wouldn't care. He'll just leave it there. I got 99 more.

What difference does it make if this one goes crazy? And trust me, they don't appreciate it when you're cutting their nose open. That poor sheep was looking at me and scant for a long, long time. Not only cut it open, I had to sew it up.

And that poor sheep is avoiding me and running to the sides of the barn, not knowing I just saved her life. It's not really what she wanted. Why can't you just leave me alone? It's only a little bug.

Why did you have to come at it so powerfully? Some are saying here this morning, why are you speaking so hard? I only slip once in a while. It's like a man who comes out his door in the wintertime and falls on his walkway almost every day. And his neighbor says, well, why don't you put salt on the ice? He said, well, no, I just enjoy the slip every once in a while.

And some people are like that. They just enjoy the slip and then come back in and say, well, God, you know, I'm only human. And if pastors like me get up and challenge their behavior, then they go out to somewhere where the behavior is not challenged.

Would pastor enjoy the slip in the pulpit in the morning? Paul stood on the deck of a perishing ship and journey in Acts chapter 27 and told the people, take some meat. Up to this point, you've not eaten what you should, and you're going to need strength for the future. He knew the ship was going to fall apart.

He knew everybody was going to be cast into the sea. And he knew it was going to be a long, arduous swim to shore. And he knew that when they got to shore, it was going to be a land they were not familiar with.

And so he told them, take some meat. And I'm telling you this morning, it's not time for pabulum, it's time for meat. It's time that we embrace the truth, we love the truth, we receive the truth.

It might be palatable to go to certain places, listen to certain messages, but it's not going to get you through the coming storm. When you need strength, it's not going to be there. When you want guidance, you're going to have forfeited it.

No, take some meat. It will strengthen you, it will strengthen your family. Don't run from the truth.

Remember, Paul said to those who were pretending that they were off doing something, but they were actually going to try to escape, he said, if you don't stay with the ship, you're not going to survive. Stay with truth, don't run from truth. Especially the men that are here, it's Father's Day today.

For the sake of God, for the sake of your family, stand up and be a man. Don't run from truth. Run towards the truth.

And run towards it with all of your heart. Embrace the truth in your own heart. Don't try to teach others until you've embraced it yourself.

Trust God for your own transformation. Trust God for the compassion, the wisdom, the ability you need to lead your family, whether your children are still under your roof or whether they live a thousand miles away. You still have influence.

Trust God and make the decision to be a man of God. Make the decision to stand up and be counted with those that have stood for Christ all of these years and have never known Him to fail them. Don't run from the hard things.

Don't run from those areas where God is challenging your life and telling you it's going to be a difficult journey, but you're going to need strength, so take some meat now. It's time for you to take some meat. John chapter 3, Jesus Himself talks about an invitation that God gives to come to the light.

You don't have to run from God. God didn't come into the world to condemn you. He came into the world that you might be saved through Him.

He came to get you. He came to cover you. He came to strengthen you.

He came to envision you. He came to empower you. He came to give you a new song and a new heart and a new mind.

He came to raise you up as a light set upon a hill that cannot be hidden, first in your home, second in your marriage, thirdly in this generation. He came to give you strength not found in anything of this world. So come to the light.

Don't be afraid of the light. Don't be afraid of letting this book examine your heart. It's not pleasant sometimes.

We all want to think that we're all doing better than we are. Thank God for the knowledge that I'm covered in Christ. So I'm not afraid to go in.

I'm not afraid of meat. I'm not afraid of truth. I'm not afraid to have God challenge my heart.

So in our opening text, there's two types of warriors that go into the battle. One who can still be reached and another who's no longer able to hear the true voice of God. And when the battle comes, the scripture says Ahab was struck between the joints of his armor.

And he said, take me out of the battle for I'm wounded. The battle increased that day and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until evening. And about the time of sunset, he died.

So all this man could do in the battle is pretend like he was strong. But he wasn't. He had no inner strength.

The life was draining from him and it was draining because he made a choice somewhere along the line not to hear the voice of God. See, a day's coming for everybody here. It'll come sooner for some and later than others.

Every one of us faces eventually a day of trial. We might face one collectively, but everyone faces their own struggle, their own battle, their own season, their own time when we can't stand in our own strength. The battle is too strong against us.

The enemies are raging too fiercely. And for those who have shut their hearts to the voice of God, the only thing that will be left is to pretend that you're standing when actually you're wounded to the point where you're going to not make it. The second man, Jehoshaphat, when they came and they surrounded him, the scripture says he cried out and the Lord helped him.

One died and one cried. Don't be afraid to cry out for help. He knew he was in a place where he couldn't win on his own.

And so he did what righteous people still do. Help me, God. Help me.

Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me for being where I shouldn't be. Forgive me for doing what I shouldn't do. Forgive me for being paired up with a man I should have left a long time ago, a partner that I should have walked away from.

Forgive me, God, for listening to these voices that claim to speak in your name that allowed me to continue in a place where I was strictly in the flesh and was cut off from where true strength is. God, please forgive me and strengthen me that I might live to fight another day. And the scripture says when he cried out, the Lord diverted his enemies, just drew their attention to something else and turned them away.

And so don't be ashamed to cry out for freedom, for direction, for truth, for God-appointed victory. Turn your chariot around, my friend, and head to the cross. Wherever you're going, whatever you're doing, whatever's in your life that shouldn't be there, turn around by the grace of God.

If you're going in the wrong direction, turn around by the grace of God and head to where the real victory is. And I can see Jehoshaphat when he realized that God had moved his enemies away from him, just steering those horses to the left or to the right, whatever way he went, and getting out of there. There's some here you need to steer your horse and you need to get away from what you're doing.

Head to the cross. There's no victory anywhere else now. There's no strength anywhere else but in the victory of Christ.

But I warn you, there's no strength in mixture. I don't care how much scripture you know. There's no strength in mixture.

Pray, because God promises. We read it this morning when the children sang. He promises to the prophet Malachi a last day returning to discernment of knowing who speaks for God and who doesn't.

Pray for that in your heart. Say, God, please get me away from voices I shouldn't be listening to. And put me in a place where I can listen, where I can hear, where I can grow in grace, where I can be made strong in Christ, where I can know the truth of God that sets me free, where I can be used of you, God, for the sake of others in the days ahead.

God, put me in that place. As your pastor, I've pleaded with you today. I've pleaded with you.

As Paul the apostle said before his death, I want it recorded that I'm free from the blood of all men. I've declared to you as best as I know the full counsel of God in this service today. And I plead with you.

In Christ's name, walk with God. Walk with where God is. Walk under a word that's from God.

If you can't find a word from God, those that are online, then get it yourself. Open this book and read from the Gospel of Matthew to Revelation. Go back and read it again, read it again, read it again, and read it again.

God will show you. So I want to give an altar call this morning strictly for people who want to cry out for freedom. God, give me strength.

God, give me freedom. It's not an embarrassing thing to have to admit that, especially those that are younger Christians. In the early years, the old things pass away, but they don't pass away quite as quickly as we'd like them to.

But God will give you the victory. On your part, cry out. On your part, don't be ashamed to say, Lord, I can't do this.

I can't leave this person. I can't escape this lifestyle. I can't stop this practice.

So God, help me to not start seeking somebody who will just agree with my sin. Help me, God, to love your word. Help me to become that which you've called me to be.

Help me to know the real victory of the cross. Help me to be a living, vibrant, standing witness for Christ. Get me through my present storm.

Let me live, oh God, let me live. Father, I thank you, Lord, for this word. I thank you, God, for the touch of your Holy Spirit in this sanctuary.

For where you are, Lord, there's a witness. There's a witness in the Spirit for those who can hear. So I'm asking you, Father, in Jesus' name, that there be a cry of freedom in this house, today and in the days ahead, Lord, that will stagger the casual seeker.

There will be such an evidence of victory here. I pray that every man, every woman, every young person in this sanctuary will meet me at the throne of heaven. God Almighty, God Almighty, God Almighty, God Almighty, God, hear me.

Don't let anybody die in their sin in this sanctuary today. Let these people live. Father, I thank you for it with all my heart.

In Jesus' name. If in North Jersey, in the annex here at Times Square Church, in the main sanctuary, if this message has spoken to your heart and those that are listening online, would you, at home you can stand up where you are. Here in the sanctuary as we stand, just come.

Just come, we're going to pray together. We're going to believe God for victory. I'm going to believe for you.

You're going to believe for you. Just join these that are coming, please. If you stand in the balcony, go to either exit in the main sanctuary, slip out.

Let's believe God for victory today. You have reason to rejoice this morning because God is drawing us to himself in this hour in which we're living now. He's drawing you.

He's drawing his people out of what would weaken us and into the freedom that he bought for us on the cross. You have reason to rejoice. Remember, Jesus said, Ask and you shall receive.

Seek you shall find. Knock, it shall be opened. Everyone who asks, receives.

Everyone who seeks, finds. To everyone who knocks, it shall be opened. The strength you need, the conviction, the courage to do right, God will give it to you.

God will give it to you. And if all hell does break out in our society today, you'll have the strength. You will stand.

You will be a testimony of the life of God and the reality of God. That's why he's calling you now out of all mixture, out of everything that would take your strength away. Now, Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart, Lord, for the honesty of these men and women to come forward and simply cry out in their heart, Lord, I need you.

I need you to be free. I need you to have strength. I need you to stop doing what I'm doing and start doing what I should be doing.

But, Lord, you told us that whoever asks, receives, and whoever seeks is going to find, and whoever knocks, the door will be opened. We will have a song. We will have a testimony.

We will stand. God, thank you that we'll not be among those who fall in this generation. Thank you for speaking to our hearts this morning.

Thank you for my brothers and sisters. God Almighty, thank you for giving them strength, strength to do right, strength to stand in a darkened time, a song that can't be taken away because the world didn't give it. And so, Father, we thank you for these things.

God, with all our heart, we give you praise. Make all of us a testimony of your glory, your name, your victory, your vision, Lord, in this time in which we're living. Make each of us a testimony of the fact that Jesus Christ is alive, sitting at the right hand of God in all power and all authority in Jesus' name.

Hallelujah!

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/yGtmCd-r7fg.mp4>

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