

William Carrol- A Portrait

by Carter Conlon

This sermon is a tribute to Pastor William Carroll, highlighting his life as a genuine man of God. It emphasizes the faithfulness, forgiveness, grace, promise, integrity, and power of God displayed through Pastor Carroll's life. The message encourages listeners to allow God to paint a beautiful picture on the canvas of their lives, yielding to His will and experiencing transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 31:59

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:45, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Jeremiah 29:13, Jeremiah 29:14, Joel 2:25, Colossians 1:27

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Transformation through the Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon is a tribute to Pastor William Carroll, highlighting his life as a genuine man of God. It emphasizes the faithfulness, forgiveness, grace, promise, integrity, and power of God displayed through Pastor Carroll's life. The message encourages listeners to allow God to paint a beautiful picture on the canvas of their lives, yielding to His will and experiencing transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Take a few moments to talk about my friend, talk about a man I came to know and deeply admire and love, a genuine man of God, William Carroll is and was. And it's a great, great privilege to take a moment. I have a message that the Lord's put on my heart, a sharing, it's just simply called William Carroll, A Portrait.

Father, I thank you, God, for the touch of heaven this morning in this sanctuary. I thank you, Lord, for just the knowledge that Pastor William is at your throne, seeing with his own eyes what we here today have to receive mostly by faith. Thank you, God, that you don't fail anyone who puts their trust in you.

And so today we ask God that you would do something in each of our lives as we look into your word, as we look into the portrait of a life that was well lived in you. God, help us, strengthen us, bring us forward, O God, as your people, give us courage and confidence in our day. And Lord, we thank you, and we give you praise and glory in Jesus' name.

If you'll turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and I want to speak about William Carroll, A Portrait, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, beginning in verse 45 right through to verse 49. We'll start there. The Word of God says, And so it is written, The first man Adam became a living being, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven.

As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust. And as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we also shall bear the image of the heavenly man.

This is the beauty, I think, of the reality of Jesus Christ indwelling the life of anyone who opens their heart to Him in honesty, sincerity, and truth. The hand of God begins to paint a brand new picture on a brand new canvas. The Word of God tells us that if anyone is in Christ, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

The old things in his or her life are passed away, and behold, all things are become new. So picture with me, if you will, an artist, the artist being God Himself. And there's an old canvas, that image of the old man, that image of dust, that image of humanity without the empowerment or the forgiveness of God being active in its life.

And suddenly the hand of God comes down and removes the old canvas. That's what happens when you come to Christ. The old canvas and everything that's been painted on that, maybe sorrow here, and anger over here, and hopelessness over here, and self-ambition over here, all of this thing is taken away, and a brand new blank canvas is put there, and the hand of God begins to paint a brand new image.

Now in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, just let me read this to you, verses 17 and 18, the scripture says, now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Now another word for this word liberty is generosity. In other words, there's this generosity of God through Christ is given to us by the Spirit of God.

When He rose from the dead, He took our captivity captive, and He gave gifts unto men. And suddenly all things become new. Suddenly the old ways don't have the power to lead, guide, suppress, or destroy us anymore.

We're given a new life source, and when we begin to read the promises of God, we see this incredible generosity of God that is in the Word of God for each of us. He promises us life, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith. All these things actually belong to the New Testament believer in Christ if we are an actual believer in Christ.

If we are willing to look into what He purchased for us on the cross and say, God, by the grace of God, by Your grace given to me, Your favor that's come on my life, these things now belong to me. So begin to paint them. Paint your image on this canvas of my life so that you might be seen.

This is what Paul goes on to say. Now he says, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty or generosity. But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

So this picture begins to be painted, not the old you, but the new you created in the image of Christ, empowered by the Spirit of God, led by the promises of God, unfolding by the will of God. We actually become a brand-new person. One time I had the opportunity to...I don't know if I'd call it an opportunity, the misfortune of actually finding a picture of what I looked like before I came to Christ.

I'm thankful that our house burned down one day and we lost all of those pictures, but somebody had kept one and showed it to me. And it's when I was a police officer and I looked in and that man was scary. And I looked at that picture and I remember the words I uttered.

I said, thank God that man is gone. Thank God that that canvas has been moved away and a new canvas has been painted because I wouldn't want to be around that man, let alone be that man. And it was the former image of myself.

And so in Christ, what picture did God paint of himself through William Carroll? Now, I'm not an art critic, so I don't notice all the little nuances that maybe an art critic would, but there were some things on Pastor William Carroll's canvas that were glaringly obvious to anybody, even with an untrained eye, who was able to look and say, what has Jesus Christ done in this man's life to prove that his relationship with God is not just a religion? It's an actual relationship. The life of Christ is actually in him. And as he beholds Jesus Christ, as Paul says, the hand of God is painting this brand new image of Christ through his life.

You see, it's not us that are being put forward. It's Christ in us, as Paul says, which is our hope of glory. Now, first of all, when we looked at Pastor William's life, we saw the faithfulness of God.

Isn't that amazing? He's not offended by our questions. Pastor William Carroll in his youth was exposed to some form of religion in his own particular community that he experienced, and he came to the conclusion that what he saw was not real. It wasn't genuine.

And he had a brilliant mind. He had a naturally brilliant mind. And so looking at what he saw, he said, these people don't actually believe what they're preaching.

They don't believe the Word of God, and I can't become part of this kind of a system. You see, he had an honest heart. Remember Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 13 says, you will search for me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart.

So Pastor William Carroll ended up on the street for three and a half years in New York City, sleeping on park benches or on the subway, wherever he could. For a season, he became a, what do you call, courier. And I used to tease him.

I said, was that same day service, your courier career? Because if you walk with Pastor William down the street, you know how slow he walked. And I said to him one day, I said, you really were a courier. I said, why do you walk so slow now? And he said, because everyone in New York City walks so fast that I feel the necessity of creating a counterbalance to this spirit in the city by walking slower than everybody else does.

And he was firmly set in that pattern. You couldn't get him out of it. One thing about Pastor William, when he got set in something, there was no moving him.

It was like a mountain that wouldn't move no matter how much you prayed. You couldn't move him if he was fully, fully set. He searched with all his heart.

He searched. He wanted to know the real God. He wanted to serve the real God.

He didn't want to serve this religion that purported to be of God, but was at its very foundation at least efficient in his sight. And one day he came into Times Square Church. And as I was told, and I've not

verified this, but as I was told that the maintenance department would let him come in on Sunday morning and he would go downstairs and maybe wash up a little bit.

And he didn't sit down in the sanctuary, but he stood at the back of the sanctuary many years ago and listened to David Wilkerson preach. And he told me for the first time in my life, he said, I heard a man who believed what he preached, who lived what he preached. And he said, I finally found what my heart had been looking for for so many years.

And he left that altar rail when the altar call was given and came forward to the altar of God. And we see in Pastor William Carroll, God painting the picture of his own faithfulness, God's faithfulness. He's not offended when we're on an honest search.

I've had this discussion with many young people who've come to Times Square Church over the years who've doubted even the reality of God. And I've told them this one thing. Yes, you may doubt his reality, but if your search is honest, he will reveal himself to you.

And then your choice will be whether or not you choose to follow him once you know he is real. And so I thank God for that faithfulness. So I see in Pastor William's portrait, the faithfulness of God.

God can be trusted. God is true. God is patient.

God is kind. God is love. God is unoffended by our struggles and unoffended by our trials and difficulties and questions.

And you might be having some of those today. And I want to tell you, God is not offended by your struggles and your trials and by the deep, deep questions in your mind about him or about his kingdom or about how it relates to your life. We saw in Pastor William Carroll's life, a great part of the canvas of his life was about forgiveness.

You see, I'm Canadian in background, and I grew up in a small mining town in Northwestern Quebec, Canada, where racism was not an issue. Matter of fact, there were no black people in my town, so it really wasn't an issue in my culture where I grew up. And so when I came to New York City, I realized, obviously, that there is a huge racial issue and divide in the history in the country.

So I turned to Pastor William, and I said, from your perspective, I said, I would like you to tell me about racism. What does it feel like from your perspective? I know a little bit of the history, but just talk to me. And we talked at length about these things.

And some of the things that he shared with me were horrific. Some of the things caused me to, in a sense, to say, how could a nation be as ignorant as this nation has been in its history, even doing what it did in some measure in the name of God? He shared about what it felt like growing up in a culture where, at least from his perspective, failure was almost like an embedded value, and how difficult it was to get out of that sense. But the one thing that overrode all the information is the fact that there was no bitterness in him.

You know, he was forgiven. He knew he had been forgiven the great debt. And as the Scripture says, you know, he took that forgiveness, and he extended it to others.

The more he shared with me, the more I felt like not forgiving people. But yet he was the one who was telling me that all of these things, with not a seed, not an ounce of unforgiveness, you would know it right away. And it made it easy to listen to because I was listening from the perspective of a man that held no grievance.

You know, there's so many people today that want the forgiveness of God but won't extend that forgiveness to others. And what happens is it's like a canvas that God's painting on, and somebody brushes by it, maybe hits it with their arm and smudges it. And when a person refuses to forgive other people after they've been forgiven, it's like the canvas is smeared.

And people walk by and say, oh, that must have been a nice picture. Or it would have been a nice picture except for that smear that's on it. And that's what unforgiveness is like.

It's a smear on the canvas of God. Don't forget that the whole of the kingdom of God is on the cornerstone of forgiveness. And we are ambassadors of a kingdom of forgiveness.

We are ambassadors of the one who went to a cross and said, Father, forgive them. Even in his own pain, his own betrayal, his own being mocked, he said, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.

And we are ambassadors of that kingdom. And through you and I, God's hand is painting forgiveness. It's a great part, actually, of our portrait.

And it was a terrific part of Pastor William's portrait. And I can stand here with confidence and tell you it was unmarred in his portrait. He had every reason to be bitter in the natural.

He had every reason to let that Adamic nature, as we read about, come to the surface, that man of dust take over from the spiritual man, from the heavenly man, as Paul says, and say, here's all the things that were done. And here's why I have a right to bear a grievance. And here's the list that I've held.

And here's the things that I feel need to be done. But none of that was in Pastor William. He simply forgave because the Word of God told him he had to.

And he was a sincere follower. Remember, his quest was, I want to meet somebody who actually believes and follows what the Word of God says. And he made the choice to forgive because he had been forgiven.

The prophet Jeremiah also says, after he says, you'll search for me and you'll find me when you search for me with all of your heart. And in chapter 29 and verse 14 of Jeremiah says, I will be found of you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity. And so in this canvas that God's hand painted called Pastor William Carroll, we found this incredible grace and promise of God.

Pastor William began his life of service to Christ, his life of ministry as it is by serving others in a ministry called The Upper Room, where homeless people from the streets as he had been for a season were brought in, given food, and he began preaching to people who he understood because he had lived there. He knew that at the heart of every homeless person, most every, there are deep questions that only God can answer. There are deep searches.

I love the fact that, you know, I often thought about Pastor William Carroll standing at the back altar rail in Times Square Church as a homeless man that comes in maybe to maybe wash his face and hands on Sunday morning, standing at the homeless at the back rail. And I had a picture one day of God bringing

these various animals he created in Genesis to Adam and saying, Adam, what shall we call this? And the scripture says, whatever Adam chose to call it, that's what it was called. Now, if I had been standing on the platform and Pastor William had been standing at that rail, and if the Lord said to me, Carter, what should we call this man? I would have looked with my natural eye and said, well, that's a homeless man.

But the Holy Spirit says, no, look deeper. Don't look with the natural eye. Look with the spiritual eye.

That's not a homeless man. That's a great teacher of the Word of God. That's a man who's going to live for me.

That's a man who's going to preach. His messages are going to be recorded. It's going to touch people all over the world.

May God give us spiritual eyes in our generation to not call people by what we see with their natural eye, but call them as God sees them. As he said, you are Simon, son of Jonas, but you shall be called Peter. And I thank God through Pastor William Carroll, I have learned through the years not to call men or women by what I see with my natural eye, but I draw back and say, Lord, show me what this is that I'm looking at.

Show me the future of this man, this woman, this person, this child that stands before me. And quite often God has done that, and he's enabled me to see things in people's lives that he's about to do that they themselves are not even aware of. Pastor William was given the grace, that means the unmerited favor of God, and the promise of God of a new life.

And he took it and began to teach other people. And it came to Pastor David Wilkerson's attention that this young man had a brilliant mind. He did.

He had a brilliant mind. I mean, it was amazing. The first time I heard him preach, I was stunned.

I mostly don't know this, but because of the diabetes in his life, when I first met Pastor William, he had lost his vision. And it was really turned out to be cataracts that formed because of diabetes. And he did have surgery, and he got his vision back for the rest of his life.

And I remember he got up to the pulpit, and he said, would you open your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 12, I believe it was. And he began to read it. He looked down, and he began to read.

But he was in the Old Testament in his Bible, and I was looking at this. And he read the whole chapter of Hebrews chapter 12, but he was in Amos or some book like that in the Old Testament. He didn't open it far enough, because I could tell by the thickness of the Bible.

He's not in the book of Hebrews. And he had a brilliant mind. And I asked him after, I said, how do you do that? He said he would listen to tapes, and he just had a mind he could remember word for word from the King James Bible at that time.

And he had such a brilliant mind that he would get up, and he would preach without notes. And we used to tease him, because the pastors at Times Square Church, we had a friendship, all of us, and we could banter about. We were just friends.

We were not ministry associates. We were actually friends. And we would tease him from time to time and say, William, you're making the rest of us look like idiots.

Could you at least pretend that you're preaching from notes? So he, with a sneer, with a little bit of a sneer, he got up the following week, and he had an iPad now for the first time. And he got up, and he pretended that he was preaching from notes, flipping his iPad. But he forgot that there was a camera behind him on the platform.

Every once in a while, it would shine down on the pulpit, and we would see that the letter H or something would be on his screen, or maybe a word. But he just had a brilliant mind. And thank God that the Lord takes what we have and makes it more than it could ever be, and takes it farther than it could ever go, and gives us more than we could ever possess, and took that mind that led him to a street in a season of turmoil, and he became one of the, I'm convinced, one of the greatest Bible teachers of our time.

And I don't hesitate to say that, because there was an anointing there. There was an understanding there. I remember my daughter Kate would ask me difficult biblical questions all the time when I was a senior pastor at Times Square Church, and I would just say, go talk to Pastor Will.

He knows the answer to that stuff. I don't know. And the last thing that I want to talk about, we saw the faithfulness of God on his canvas.

We saw the forgiveness of God on his canvas. We saw the grace of God. We saw the promise of God.

But we also saw the integrity and the power of God. Now, Pastor William Carroll had the countenance of a lamb, but there was a lion in there. And if you wanted to get roared at, challenge the integrity of God, and his countenance would change.

And you'd notice every time he preached, I can't imitate him. I thought I'd give it a try, but I can't do it. But there was one thing he would say.

He is a great God. He believed it was like a miner down six miles down a mining shaft in the middle of the earth. It came down from down so deep.

And it's like somebody went down underground and found a stream of gold, and he's yelling up to everybody on the service, I found it. It's just as great as anybody had ever told you it is. There's a treasure here.

You can trust God. And he would be offended if anybody challenged the integrity of God or the power of God. Because you see, when you have walked with God, when you have known the power of God, there's something in your heart that says, how can you possibly challenge the integrity of the one who created the universe, the one whose words can be trusted, the one who does everything he says he's going to do, the one who opens every prison door, gives sight to every blinded eye, heals every bruised heart, gives hope to those that are hopeless, gives the treasure of heaven to those that have no resource and no way of going forward.

How can you possibly doubt the integrity of God? You see, that's the reality of a life that's been lived in God. We become so entranced in an understanding of that every word of God can be trusted. The words of God have the power to create a universe.

The words of God have the power to make something out of nothing. The words of God can raise the dead. The words of God can calm the storm.

And Pastor William knew the greatness of God. And every time he spoke of the greatness of God, you know what I'm saying, it came from so deep that he could never casually say it. He knew the power of God because he knew what it was like to live on the street.

He knew what it was like to grow up in a situation where he was, at least the tendency to lose hope was always gnawing at his heart. He knew what it was like to come to the one who forgave him, empowered him, lifted him up, gave him grace, gave him promise, took his life to where it could never be taken in anything of natural ability or natural strength. And he knew that God's word could be trusted.

That's why he was a teacher of God's word, because God cannot lie. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

He knew the power of God. The prophet Joel says these words, and we saw this in the canvas of Pastor William Carroll. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army, which I sent among you.

And you shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord, your God. He knew this was true. God had restored into his life everything that the circumstances of this world tried to take away from him.

Every contrary thought to truth had been subdued by the word of God and by the power of God. And his life was a testimony of the reality of God. Thank God who has dealt wondrously with you.

And my people shall never be put to shame. In other words, you'll never get to the point in your life where you say, I wish God had meant what he said. Never.

He says, my people will never be put to shame. Every promise I make to you is yea and amen. It's true.

I cannot lie. And if you trust me, it will come to pass. Then you will know that I am in the midst of Israel.

I'm the Lord, your God, and there is no other. And my people, second time he says, shall never be put to shame. And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. And on my maidservants and my menservants, I will pour out my spirit in those days.

It shall come to pass. Thank God. Thank God for Pastor William Carroll.

Thank God for a life that was well lived. Thank God for a life where the Lord wrote his story. And it's not even debatable.

This picture belongs in an art museum of history. It really does. Because I see no marring in this picture.

I see a life that was yielded to God and I see the faithfulness of God's hand painted in William Carroll's life. But the scripture says it will come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. And so the decision remains for you and I to say, God, will I just learn about you or will I let you write your story on the canvas of my life? Will I let you put your hand, will I let you paint your words and your will in those areas in my life where I might be hesitant to even agree with you? God, would you let it be your will and not mine be done.

Let it be your thoughts and not mine that govern the rest of my life. Would you paint something in my life and through my life that also belongs in the museum of faith one day. God almighty, don't let anything of this world or of my own thinking brush up against that canvas and mar that picture.

Don't let it happen, God. Don't let it happen. Give me your Holy Spirit.

Give me your promise. Give me, my God, the ability to prophesy. That means to interpret, to see the scriptures, to see your hand at work, to see and to know your character and know the things that you have done and the things that you will do.

Give me a vision for the future, even in my old age. That's what it means when it says your old men will dream dreams. They will not be bound.

Men and women who grow older in Christ will not be bound by talking about the past. They will still have a vision for the future. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

Hallelujah. And your young men shall see visions. I will give them a picture of what their life is going to be.

I'll present them a picture of their canopy and what it will look like at the end of their days. I'll show them what I'm about to do. Your young men will see visions.

And on my maidservants and menservants, I'll pour out of my spirit in those days. In other words, there will be no exceptions to this glorious visitation of God, which began on the day of Pentecost. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

I don't know about you, but I'm not going to be left out. My picture's not finished yet. My picture's not done.

It's not ready to be framed and hung up. God's still painting little corners and still adding a few things. And one day he's going to put his signature on it and say, well done, good and faithful servant.

Well done. You've run your race. You've finished your course.

And so I say to Pastor William Carroll, you might not be able to hear me, but Jesus does, and he can tell you what I'm saying today. Well done, good and faithful servant. Well done.

You ran your race well. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. I was sitting with Pastor William in September down at Roosters, the cafe, and I asked him, I said, William, what's your health situation? I said, and tell me the truth.

Don't just say fine. I want to know the truth. And he told me, he said, well, the doctors tell me I have at the most five years, but more practically probably about two to live.

He said, but that doesn't matter to me. He said, I'm going to take every ounce of strength I have, and I'm going to pour it into these young people here at this Bible school campus, because they are the hope. They are the future.

They are the key to what God is going to do. So I will take all the strength that I have, and I guess that was the last little thing that had to be written before the signature of God was placed on this canvas, is the enduring power that God gives to those who trust in him. His body was failing, but his heart and his spirit were very much alive.

And the students know that even in his last few days, he's still speaking to you from his living room when he couldn't muster the strength to go to class. I do thank God for this wonderful life. And it's so wonderful to be able to stand here and say that this is a life that was well-lived in the power of God.

But now every good life, every life that's lived, every life that is a portrait of Christ challenges us. It should challenge us. It should challenge you.

It should challenge me to go to yield to God. Not to do something for God, but yield to God and say, Lord, let your hand now paint the rest of my life. And if there's a marred place on the canvas, you're an artist, you can correct that.

You can repaint that little piece that maybe I chose not to let you be God in that area of my life. Yeah, I want to give an altar call this morning. You know, we haven't done an altar call since COVID started, and I don't know if it's possible.

I hope it is, that we can maintain social distance. But I just want to give an altar call this morning for people like you and people like me that say, God, paint the rest of my life and paint a beautiful picture of yourself. Not of me, but you, Christ in me, the hope of glory.

As I behold you, the Apostle Paul said, as I just simply behold who you are, behold your victory, behold your goodness, I begin to be changed into that same image from glory to glory. So God, let it not be about me. Let it be about you.

And as I just look into as many things as you choose to show me about yourself, let that image become mine. And so Father, I just thank you, God. I thank you.

Thank you that there are certain people the Bible speaks about who, being dead, yet still speak. And Pastor William is still speaking to us this morning of a life that is well-lived and the greatness of our God. So I'm asking for the grace to let you paint the rest of my canvas, whatever that means, wherever it leads, whatever it becomes.

And thank you for it in Jesus' name. Let's all stand, please, if we will.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ylllsyR_1Z4.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/carter-conlon/william-carrol--a-portrait/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net