

Testimony

by Teresa Conlon

Teresa Conlon shares her journey from a superficial understanding of faith to a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ, emphasizing the power of personal testimony and community support.

Duration: 48:50

Scripture: Judges 6:14, Psalm 22:1, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:28, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Personal Faith", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He addresses those who may have heard about Jesus but have not truly accepted Him into their hearts. The preacher uses the story of Gideon from the Bible to illustrate how God can use ordinary people for His purposes. He encourages believers to rely on the power of God within them and to step out in faith to share the gospel with others.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, P.O. Box 260, Lindell, Texas, 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. I'm just going to ask if you would stand with me just for one minute. Everybody in this place.

Because God is in this place. And where He is, He makes the place holy. Now, I'm expecting, because God is here tonight, that He is... I'm expecting Him to touch lives radically tonight.

I'm expecting Him to go right to the gates of hell. He's going to yank some souls right from the enemy's hands tonight. There are some of you here tonight, you don't even know why you came.

There are some of you here tonight, and you've been wondering through everything you've been hearing, it's like, God, I so much want to believe in You. Is it true what I'm hearing? God, can I trust You? And tonight, God is going to answer your questions. He's going to do more than answer a question.

He's going to touch you. He's going to change you. Because to know God is to know life.

To know Him is to be transformed radically. So I'm going to pray for you. Father, I thank You, Lord, for this time.

Father, I ask the Holy Spirit, You come now. Just lift up Jesus. Lift Him up so we can see Him.

Lift Him up so that we can understand what He's saying to us. Lift Him up so that His love will melt our heart, melt our walls, oh God. You are an awesome God, and I thank You, God, for what You're going to do tonight.

Because Jesus is in this place. And I thank You, Lord, and I give You the praise for the lives You're touching even now. In Jesus' precious name, amen and amen.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. So many people have been sharing their testimony.

So I think I'll just stay on the train and share a little bit of my testimony. When I first became aware of Christ, I was raised in a nominally religious home, and we went to church. But Christ wasn't real to me.

He was just somebody I knew about. But when I was 19, I was in college, and there was a group of students, and they were really excited about this weekend that was being organized. And they were going to come, and they were going to talk about the living Christ.

And that really interested me. You see, because I had come to college from a family life that was really unstable at that point, a family life that when I went to college, I got there with a lot of holes. I was looking for my friends to fill the holes.

I was looking for everything that college was going to be. I was looking for it to give me something, because I felt if you looked at me, people looked and saw holes. And, you know, on one hand, I was popular.

I could make friends easily. But God knows what I felt. And when I was around people, it's like I was looking for them to fill the holes.

And so when they talked about this weekend, a group that were going to go away, I was strangely drawn by it. And so there was a group of us, and we went, and they had this weekend. And I saw kids testifying and talking about Jesus just like you might have saw tonight.

And it was like amazing to me that God was so real to them. It was amazing to me that they talked like they knew him. And I remember feeling warm, feeling secure, kind of feeling like there was hope, feeling happy in that place.

But I didn't know how to get what they did, but I was really good at mimicking what they did. Because, you know, if I was in a group and I wanted to be with that group, I could be like they were. And I saw there, who is this group talking about Jesus? And I was drawn to that.

And so I started to talk like that. And I began to, you know, want to hang around and do what they were doing. But, you see, I was really focusing on them.

I was focusing on what they were doing. And I thought if I hung around them, the light they had in them would somehow, you know, transfer to me. And so I was hanging around this group, and they would organize other weekends.

And they said, listen, you're getting this. You're understanding what we're talking about. Why don't you come with us and help us organize the weekends? And my reaction was, I do understand.

I am getting it. And I thought that's really good. And when I was around these people, I tell you, I could talk just like they talked.

And I was like just their little clone. When they would talk about Jesus, when they would talk about what it was to walk with God, I could sound just like them. And they actually started setting me in front of people and began to teach other students other weekends.

But it was so miserable for me. Because when I left them and I left that place, I went back. And the stuff that I knew was sin, I was still doing.

I would sin right up until Friday night, go into those meetings, act like they did, wave my hands. And when I would leave on Sunday, I would go exactly back to what I didn't want to be doing, or many times what I wanted to be doing but knew I should stop doing. I just didn't have any power over it.

And yet there was a side of me I wanted so much. But I didn't realize that I was looking to my friends and I wasn't looking to Him. And I did this for about a year.

I would go on these weekends and I'd help organize them. But in the end, I started to pull away because I really felt like I really admired these people and they had it all together. And I finally figured out they could do it.

They could walk with God, but I couldn't. They had it all together. I'm sure when they went home Sunday night, they didn't just fall back into all that stuff they knew they shouldn't be doing.

I figured they were walking on water all week and they didn't sink like I did all the time. And so I didn't want to be a hypocrite, and so I pulled away. And I thought, since they can do it and I can't, I can't hang around and be part of the leadership of this anymore.

And I pulled away. And you know, the interesting thing was that I really did, when I was in that group, I did feel the warmth and the love that God had for me in Jesus Christ. I could tell you things about God.

And I was trying so hard in certain circumstances. I wear a big cross. I would carry a big white Bible.

I really looked like somebody that was on a search for God. But I was so empty and powerless before my sin. And so when I pulled away from them, I went back to a lifestyle of sin, but I was so miserable in it.

And finally, about two years after this, a friend was talking to me. And I had just graduated, and they wanted to know, you know, what are you going to do with your life? What are you going to do? And, you know, I was going to tell them my big plans, plan A and plan B. And I looked at them and I said, I will never be happy till I give my life to Jesus Christ, till I know Jesus Christ. And I was so shocked I said that.

First of all, I wasn't very, I wasn't used to sharing my heart with people. And second, I wasn't used, I didn't know that that was in the bottom of my heart. I did not realize how much I fully believed that.

I didn't believe I could walk it, but I believed I would never be happy without Jesus Christ. And, beloved, that is what started to make the difference. In that two-year period of pretending that I knew God, got desperate, found out who I really was.

A person that had no power over their sin, and a person who had every intention and desire to want to please God, but could not. And when I got to the end of the day, all I could say is that I tasted my sin, I've done what I wanted to do, and I know I will never be happy without Jesus Christ. But I had a huge problem.

I felt I wanted Him, but I didn't know He wanted me. Finally, I was living in this house with a whole bunch of students, and this girl, we had an extra room in the house, in this student house, and we put up this sign that we had a room vacant. And this girl came in one day, and she was all bright and happy, and she said, Praise the Lord, do you have a room in this place? And I looked at her.

I said, yeah, you want to see it? Showed her the room, and she was so happy. And then she goes, I'm a Christian, you know. I looked at her, and I said, I am too.

Because I'm not Buddhist. And, you know, I had been around people that spoke like that, and I was a little bit ashamed. And all of a sudden, I didn't want her to think badly of me, even though I didn't know her.

I said, yeah, I'm a Christian too. She goes, oh my goodness, I have been praying. Wait till I tell my mother.

Wait till I tell everybody. I was praying I would find a place with Christians. And she was ecstatic.

She moved in the next week. She came with her Bible. She said, we can have Bible studies together.

Where do you go to church? And it was like, oh, I was being backed into the corner by this. And, you know, I would give her something about, you know, well, I'm in the Word. But, you know, I didn't really have a church to say I was going to.

She goes, that's fine. So we'd open up, and she'd start. She'd pray, and she'd read the Word.

And I'm looking at her, and I'm thinking, this girl so has it. And she said to me, would you like to come to church with me? And I started, you know, I have a church, and I read the Bible just like you. And little by little she began to sense that even though I had the terminology, I didn't have Him.

And she just kept reaching out to me. She was loving towards me. And finally I said, okay, I'll go to church with you.

When I stepped into her church, there was a presence of God there. And they opened up the Bible, and they began preaching from the Word. And something in me was stirring.

It was like water inside me started to stir. I was so thirsty. I didn't know that there was living water that could satisfy.

I thought that when I came to God that I had to work and try hard, and I would always be falling down. I'd always have my head down before Him. And God would forever have to come and say, Teresa, I forgive you, and lift up my head.

But I had no hope of living for Him once I left the church. But something was stirring inside me. And friends, you know what the difference was? That finally, in that church service, I cried out, and I said, Jesus, if you want me, you can have me.

And something happened. And I didn't have a lot of theology. But I know now that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the living God, heard me and came, and He lived inside of me.

And what happened was that I began to understand that where and before when I was trying to please God, what was happening was that I was making a mental assent to some truth. But the Scripture tells us that salvation is a person. That salvation is not saying yes to some truth in my head.

But salvation is having God live in me. Where God comes, who is holy, who is all-powerful, He comes, and His life and His light comes and dwells in me. And something happens that's different from before.

Before I was looking to people, before I was looking to, am I doing this right? Before I was saying, I hope I can walk it, and I'm going to give it my best shot. But beloved, there was something so missing, because I still had not come to my salvation, who is Jesus Christ. I had come to some truth, but I had not come to Him.

And the difference was that when Almighty God heard an honest, broken cry, that I was ready to come to Him and not come to please friends and not come because I figured it could maybe somehow help me or better me. But I came to Christ. In my brokenness and my emptiness, He came to me.

And He lives in me. And it was all the difference. You see, salvation is God in us.

And when He comes, He comes in power. He comes with a devil-breaking power. He comes with a devil-defying power.

And who I was before, all of a sudden, it seems like the power that sin had over me is broken. And all of a sudden, I had something in me that I knew wasn't there before. And all of a sudden, I found myself going to that Bible.

And I was hungry for it, and I couldn't stop reading it. And I would read it and read it, and some of it I started to understand. And that Word began to get in me, and it began to be life to me.

And I began to change. I wasn't trying to make myself change. The Son of God who lived in me and His power and His glory lived in me.

And the Scripture says that He who begins a work in you, He is going to finish it. And what I didn't understand was, it was not now me trying to change. It was God in me changing me.

That's what He does. When God comes into our life, there is transformation. When God comes into our life, things are broken.

The power of sin is broken. And all of a sudden, even though I would sin, things didn't change overnight. Even though I would sin, all of a sudden, I would cry out from the depths, and I didn't look to myself to change it.

I'd look to Jesus, and I would cry out and say, I can't, but You can. And He living in me began to make a difference. It was Him living in me, something.

I wasn't thinking this up. I wasn't hoping this. I knew He lived in me.

You know, it's so different when you know God lives in you. It makes all the difference. When you know that it is God's intent, He doesn't come to us with salvation.

He is salvation. He doesn't come to us with more rules and regulations. He says, I'll live in you.

If you will come to me, if you will acknowledge that you're a sinner, if you will agree with me, it's time you agree with me. And that's what I did. I agreed with Him that I was a sinner, and I was hopeless to change.

I would keep on sinning, except He came. And He did something in me that only God could do. And when God came in and He did what only He could do, it's beloved, He brought all of a sudden something broke in my mind.

It doesn't happen overnight, but little by little, as I began to read that Word, I began to understand things of God. I didn't have anybody teach me, because after I got saved and married, I moved out to a farm in the middle of nowhere. And my only company was a Bible.

And I didn't have anybody teaching me the things of God, except I would open this book, and I was so hungry for it. And I would read it and read it. And you know, the Bible tells us that there was a young man, in the Bible it talks about a young man named Gideon, and he reminded me so much of me.

When I came to God and I knew that all of a sudden something greater was living in me that would give me hope, when I would fall, He would pick me up. When I want to condemn myself, He would say, I love you. When I would go off and think like I've really got something in God now, He would remind me that pride was causing Him to withdraw from me.

And little by little, He began to teach me, this is about me, Teresa. If you're going to walk with me, you have to draw on me. I live in you.

You have to have my life. I want you to lay down your life, because I gave you the power to do it. When your sin rises up in your heart, call on me, and I give you the power.

You've lived your life lame when it came to sin. You could never run from it. But if you cry out to me, you'll see I've strengthened your ankles.

And if you will buy faith in me, cry out to me. All of a sudden, you have strength in your ankles, and you can stand up and walk away from it. I didn't know I had that strength until I cried out, until I realized, Christ, you live in me, and you strengthen my ankles.

And when I have to move by faith, even though I had never been able to resist certain sin before, when I moved in His direction, I found out there was strength in my ankles, and I could stand on my feet. But when I thought there were some things that I could handle, God, I really don't need you to do this. I'm sure I can change on this part.

I want to take a little credit. I want to say, God, I've got a few things down now. I found out that I could not even get to my feet, let alone walk.

Salvation is a person. Salvation is Jesus Christ. Salvation is Him living in me, giving me power to live the life He's asking me to live.

But there was a young man called Gideon, and the Bible says that he lived in a time where it really wasn't popular to live for God. He was living in a time when the enemies of the people of God had invaded the land of Israel, and they impoverished it. They came in, they'd take the crops every year, they would take the harvest, and the people were living so poor.

And what happened was that the people of God turned away from a living God, and they began to erect false altars in the backyard, saying, if God, most high God, won't hear us, maybe the gods of the land will hear us. And it was a time when the people of God were so confused. There was such a mixed message of what it was to walk with God, what it was to live for God.

I'll tell you something. As many people as you ask, that's how many opinions there were on, how do you walk with God, and how do you live a successful life, and how do you know that God loves you? As many people as you talked to, you'd have an opinion. And it was like this young man, Gideon, he didn't know truth anymore.

When he would look to father, when he would look to the people in the land, it seemed like they were just getting poorer and poorer, that the enemies were running over them, impoverishing them. But the Bible tells us that he was a young man of God. He just had so little understanding of God.

And the Bible tells us in this very troubling time that an angel of the Lord appeared to him. And this is what he said to him. He said, Gideon, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

Gideon, the Lord is with you. Beloved, that is the Gospel. The Lord is with you.

If you've asked Christ into your life, if you've come to a person, if you've cried out and said, God, I am a sinner, and I need you, and I give myself to you. God has done a holy transaction with you, and heaven lives in you. The power of heaven lives in you.

And the Gospel is God is with you. It doesn't matter how struggling you are. It doesn't matter how weak you are.

It doesn't matter the high school you go to. It doesn't matter if you're the only one. It doesn't matter if all week you can't open your mouth to say the name Jesus in front of people.

God is with you. Because when God comes in, he doesn't leave. No, he doesn't.

And God comes to this young man, and he says, the angel says to him, the Lord is with you, Gideon. The Lord is with you. He says, thou mighty man of valor.

That word valor means that mighty man, you're full of power, strength, you're like an army. It's like, I know he's looking around his shoulder going, this angel can't be talking to me. I know me.

And he's in the presence of an angelic being. Heaven is in his midst, and you have to speak the truth. And he says to him, oh, he said, if God is with us, why have all these things befallen us? Why can the enemies come and plunder us? Where are the miracles? How come if we say we serve the living God, God seems so far away.

Why is it that the enemies can come and overrun us? Why has God forsaken us? And you know what God's answer to him was, all his questions. God's answer to him was, go in this thy might. I'm going to use you.

I'm going to use you powerfully. But go in this thy strength. I have sent thee.

And beloved, think about this. Gideon is full of questions. He doesn't even have some good theological questions.

God came to him and said, I am with you. He goes, well, how come you're not with the whole crowd? God says, I am with you. And he goes, God, if you are with us, and God is saying, oh, I'm talking to you.

I am with you. And he's going, if you're with us, how come it seems, how come if you just even mention God, you're going to get slammed? If you even mention God, people are going to turn away from you. If you even mention God, people are going to run away in droves.

God says, no, I'm talking to you. I'm talking to you. And he says, you are full of strength.

You are full of power. And you are an army. And when Gideon keeps just giving to God all these theological questions he has no answer to, God says, listen to this.

I am sending you. And Gideon, it tells all of a sudden he gets personal. It's like all of a sudden a word of God is getting through this thick of head.

It's like God is talking to me. God is talking to me. And he says, God, you can't be talking to me.

God, I am the least. I'm from a poor family. I'm from a poor family.

And I'm the least in my father's house. I'm from a family that has nothing. We have no reputation.

We have nothing that you can use, God. And I am the least in my house. When I stand and speak, nobody wants to hear what I have to say.

They don't listen to me, God. And God, I'm poor before you. I know that there's a God somewhere.

But if you're looking to me to be the great Savior of Israel, God, you're looking in the wrong place. Because there's nothing but poverty and emptiness in me and around me and everywhere I come from. I'm not a mighty man of valor.

And God's word to this young man says, the Lord says to him, surely I will be with you. You know what God's answer was to a young man who kept saying, God, you can't be wanting to use me. You can't be speaking to me.

God kept saying, I'm going to use you and I am with you. I'm going to use you and I am with you. And the more that he kept trying to dissuade God why it couldn't be him, God says, I am going to use you and I am with you.

And beloved, there is how we know that we can be what God is asking us to be. We're not looking to ourselves to do this. But the word that God is giving us is I am with you.

I, Almighty God, am with you. If you have opened up your heart to me, if you've asked me to come in, I have not left you. I know who you are.

I know your family. I know where you're coming from. But I am with you and you're going to find out it is enough.

Because I've started a work in you. I will finish it. Now, if we sit before the word of the Lord and we have not come to who our salvation is, Jesus Christ.

If we do not have the witness from the Spirit of God, he lives in me. If we don't have that witness that things have changed, not because I've tried anything, but because a supernatural thing has happened. And God is speaking to me and I know he's with me.

Where before I was full of despair, I now have hope. When I cry to him, he hears me. When all of a sudden, when I've been filled with needing the approval of people and being so empty when I leave the house.

Now when I call on his name, something, he stirs in me and he tells me I am with you. If that is your experience, then know that God is with you and it's going to be enough. Because he who started is going to finish it.

Now here is our testimony if we truly have the salvation. We have come to Christ and he lives in us. The scripture says that God now tells him, Gideon, I want you to go to the backyard idols and I want you to tear them down.

And Gideon is going, tear down my father's idols? Cut down the grove and build an altar? Cut down that grove made to bale where everybody worships, hoping that if they do that, then the crops will grow a little better. We can hide something from the enemy. They're going to kill me if I do that.

Nobody is going to understand this. They feel that they can worship God, but also if they have this idol in the backyard, things will go a little bit better. God says, I am with you.

The first thing that goes is every false way. Everything that's in competition with me. Now we're talking about Gideon here.

This is a guy who is not feeling especially strong in himself because he's not. But yet that word that God brings to him is stirring because he has God in him. And when the word of God is spoken, it stirs something in him.

And the scripture tells us that he goes with some friends in the middle of the night and they do what God is saying. And beloved, that is a picture of you and I when we have come to God. I'll tell you something.

God is going to take us by the hand and he's going to lead us to places where he's going to say, you have to do this. And we go, I can't do that, God. And he goes, I know you can't.

But I'm still telling you, I am with you. You will do it. And then it's like, God, I will do it if you go with me.

He says, that's what I'm saying. I will go with you. I will go with you.

And so Gideon gets up and in the middle of the night, because he's afraid, he goes with ten, ten buddies. And they cut down the grove and they build an altar and they sacrifice. And beloved, that's like when we've come to God.

Believe me, God is going to take you and I to places where we have to chop down that altar. For me, the first place that God said to me when I came to him is, now you are going to forgive these people. I was like, God, no, no, no.

They're supposed to be asking my forgiveness. I don't go to them. But God would not let me go.

I live in you. Now that's got to show. If I live in you, it's got to show on the outside.

If it's truth that I live in you, then the truth has to come out. Something's going to change. And girl, it's going to be you.

Because I thank God, God doesn't change. And you know, God many times takes the most reluctant and stubborn and prideful people just to show he is God. Just to show that he can take anyone.

And when he lives in them, by the spirit of God in them, everything else in them bows. If God is in us, it's got to show on the outside. And even though sometimes we're not the most, we can be the most reluctant, God still has his way.

And so Gideon, what God was asking me, myself and Gideon, is God is saying, no, you are going to go and you're going to ask them forgiveness. It was like, God, if they start asking me, why are you asking forgiveness? Why are you coming to us? And why are you asking us forgiveness? I mean, these people know the history that we've had together. And it was like, God, if they ask me to start bringing up the past and all the pain, I can't do it.

I can't go there. I can't do that. There's so much buried concerning these people.

I don't want to do that. And God, if I go to them and I ask them for their forgiveness and I really feel they should be asking me forgiveness, it's like saying it was okay what they did to me. It's okay.

God is saying, no, I'm asking you to do this so it will be okay with you. I'm asking you to let it go because I'm going to heal you. I'm going to do something here.

And so I was sitting in a service and it was like, all right, all right, I will. But as soon as I got out into the night alone, it's like, I can't do this. I can't do this.

I can't. When I got alone, it was like, this is like every other time, God, when I came to you, when I thought I was yours a few years ago, whenever I got alone, it was like nothing changed. And I got out of that black parking lot and all of a sudden I looked up and I saw on the top of a church a steeple, a sign of the cross, and it was lit up.

And it was God saying, I am with you. That's the difference. I am with you.

And I went to their door and they came to the door and I said, I'm here to ask you if you forgive me. And they looked and they said, sure, why not? And they turned around and went away, left. But I, on the other hand, floated back to my house.

It was like I had been freed from an incredible load, this huge load, this weight. God was starting the process of healing me. And I can tell you today that there is absolutely no animosity in my heart.

God has completely set me free and healed me completely towards all those people at that time. God then asked me, he said, I want you to open your mouth and speak about me. And it was like, God, you know how nervous I am.

I can't do that. That's so hard. And yet I just felt like God is saying that you have to open your mouth and say that I am Lord.

And so it's like, all right, I will. And then it was back and forth because, you see, I'm so stubborn. God doesn't just come to me and then I fall on my knees and I say, I will do it.

I wish I was. But in those days, I'll tell you, it was a tug of war. And God's saying, you're going to open your mouth and you're going to start to tell people what I've done.

And I wanted to. But when I got around people, I clammed up. I got intimidated.

I backed down. I was afraid big time. And then I'd go back with my head hanging.

Oh, God, I failed. Oh, God, I failed. But tenderly, he would lift my chin up.

Say, I love you. I am with you. You will do it.

I remember the one day, it's like, all right, that's it. That's it. I'm going to go to the bank.

And the first person I meet at the bank, I'm just going to witness. You know, God knew my heart. You know, sometimes that's just how it had to happen with me.

The first person I meet, I get to the bank. There is nobody there. I go into the bank.

There is nobody there. This is noontime. There is nobody at the bank.

It's like, oh, phew. Well, thank you, Lord. I'm glad you know my heart.

And I really don't have to do it because you know I was willing to do it. But you obviously don't want. And then I noticed the person behind there was no longer a teller but the bank manager.

It was like, you want me to witness to the bank manager? So I go up and I say, excuse me, pushing my thing under the thing. Have you ever thought about God? He looks at me. Yes, I have.

Just a minute. He goes around. He locks the bank door.

Now, normally that could be even more scary than witnessing. He locks the bank door so no one else can come in. And he comes back around.

He goes, what were you saying? And I was able to share with him how Jesus is real, how Jesus came into my heart and how he changed me, how I knew that I had power to do things I could never do before, how he had forgiven me of my sin. And now, because he had cleansed me, I was living this new life in his power. And I was able to forgive people and love people and even speak about it.

And by the end, I was so glowing. And he goes, I want that. I was like, you do? He goes, yes, my wife would like to hear about this too.

I said, sure, well, come on over. My husband and I, we will tell you about him. And they did.

And they got saved. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

That's our salvation, that God is going to take us places that in our flesh we don't want to go. And then he's going to say, watch, I'm going to be God to you. Everything in you that used to resist me is going to bow.

It is real. So when I come into your life, I can make you a mighty man of valor. And I will use you because I am with you.

Beloved, that is the secret of living a victorious Christian life, is that when we come to Christ, he lives in me. He lives in you. There's got to be a witness of the Spirit that that's a transaction that has happened.

But when he comes and he comes in, there is a power in us that is undeniable. And we are never the same. We are changed.

We have a new life. It is his life. It is divine life.

It is holy life. It is pure life living in me. And it is subduing everything that the world, the flesh, and the devil had in me before.

I am living a new life because I'm drawing on the life of Christ. All of a sudden, there's a longing in me to want to pray, not because I'm trying to get brownie points with God, but there is something in me that wells up, that just wants to acknowledge him, that just wants to say, You are God. You are real.

You are powerful. And I thank you today that everything that is in me that's not like you, you have determined that it will bow before you. And I'm getting excited.

I wake up in the morning and I'm saying, God, I thank you. You are real. And you are powerful.

And you are doing life transformation in me. And I thank you that even though there are times I don't want to hear what you have to say or obey you, you promise you will never leave me nor forsake me. You say you love me.

And you are loving me and leading me into wholeness. I just want to close. Because a few years ago, I used to sit down here in the congregation, and I was sitting there and I felt one day that the Holy Spirit would say, said to me, You're going to speak up there.

You're going to speak behind that pulpit. And it was like, God, I know, now that I know you're not talking to me. I know that.

But then why would I think that up? God, is that you? You are telling me that someday I'm going to speak behind a pulpit? God, I've never seen a woman speak in this church. And I know you know me. This is so hard to believe that you could use me like that.

But in the right time, after God had brought me through, taught me lessons, broken me, at a time, one time there was a phone call with Pastor Dave, and he was saying, I feel impressed with the Holy Spirit. I want you to share. I want you to speak.

And I remember it was a Friday night. And I was just completely undone. It was like, No, I can't do that.

I can't preach. I've never preached. I wouldn't know what to say.

I don't know what to do. And so I put down a few thoughts, and in the end, I was so overcome with fear. I was so full of fear and trembling.

It's like, I can't do this. God, I have such a horrible fear of man. And I didn't know how deep it was until I was put in this place.

I didn't know how much I couldn't, except for God. And I remember showing up that Friday night, and I was praying every step of the way that the sidewalk would open up, and I would fall in, and I would never be seen again. And I'm not kidding.

And I remember standing in the back room, just before prayer time, and I remember that I was dying a thousand deaths. I was so nervous, I didn't even know what I was speaking on anymore. Every thought I ever had in my head had left.

And there was nothing there. And I was in a total panic. And I was like, God, if you've called me, this is not funny.

If you get up to speak, there's supposed to be some words there. I broke out into a sweat, and I was dying a thousand deaths. The only thing is, I was rooted to the spot.

My knees were so, I was so undone, I couldn't run away. My legs wouldn't move. And I remember we were about to pray.

I remember Pastor Dave saying, there is power in this room. And even though I couldn't sense it, even though I didn't know it, there were those that were in tune with God, were saying, there is power here. There is somebody that is going to have to be so dependent on me to do this, I'm going to show up.

There is somebody here who knows they cannot obey me, but because they have, they're here, I'm going to show up. Beloved, so many times, God is not looking at how weak we are. It's how willing we are.

We have to look away from ourselves. God is saying tonight, I want to use you. If Christ is in you, He's saying, I am with you, mighty man of valor.

I see you strong. I see you full of power, because what I'm going to ask you to do, there is no hope that you can do it. The only hope is, I live in you, and I am with you, and I'm going to blow your mind, what I'm going to do in you, what I'm going to do through you.

That is the gospel. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Tonight there are people, you've come and you've heard about Jesus, but you don't have Him. You don't. You're here because of friends.

You've got the feeling. You're drawn. You're interested in Christ, but you don't have Him.

You've never come to Him. You know about Him, and there's stuff in your head, but your heart, your heart has never gone down before Him and said, God, I'm a sinner, and God, I need you, and it's going to mean a radical transformation, but God, I'm sick of who I am, and I want what you are. I want who you are.

Those desperate ones, that's who Christ comes to. Those that are dabbling in religion or would like to add Jesus to their life so that the whole general thing would improve are not going to get it. But we've heard tonight how many people, when they were broken, we were there at the end of things, and they cried out, that's when Christ came, because they needed Him, because salvation is a person.

Salvation is not some truce in our head. And tonight, there are some people that you have never come to Christ that way. You've never had the witness of the Spirit that God has heard your prayer, and accepted you, and there is a power, His power, Him living in you, that has broken the power of sin in your life.

You've never been able to stand and walk in another direction, because He does not live in you. There is not that power. But tonight, in His mercy, in His mercy, God is calling some tonight to say, and I will come to you.

There will be a radical transformation, because there will be life, my life in you. There is that. But tonight also too, there are some of you, you are Gideon.

You are just like me. You don't think there is anything that could be great, because you don't consider yourself holy. You know who you are.

And yet, God is coming saying, I will be with you. I'm going to take you now. I want you to get up, because you have the power.

I live in you. I want you to get up, because I live in you. You have the power.

And you're going to walk in a direction you've never gone before. But I'm leading you. I am with you.

And you are going to have power like an army. You are going to be able to walk in my spirit, because I am with you, and it's me directing you. God has been speaking to some of you.

He's been telling you a long time, obey me on this. And it's like, God, you know who I am. God's saying, I am with you.

It's going to change. I live in you. Prove me now.

So, if you'll just stand with me. Hallelujah. As the musicians come, we're not going to play church.

I've spoken life-changing truth. I've spoken to you Jesus' life in us. It's not church.

But if you want to meet Christ, if you want to open your heart to Him, so that He can live in you, and do all that He promised to do, you come to the front. There's going to be people who are going to come, and they're going to pray with you. You're going to know a radical transformation.

Be prepared to be radically changed. Be prepared to have life in you that defeats the darkness and the despair. But there's also some of you, God, you're Gideons, you've been hiding, you've been hiding, saying, God, you can't use me like I hear of great people being used.

God's saying to you tonight, I want you to obey me now. I want you to obey me. I've been speaking to you about things.

I want you to look away from yourself, and I want you to look at me. I am with you. I am with you.

You're going to do it. You are going to do it. I'm going to use you in a powerful way.

I am with you. And those that are hearing that call, that Gideon call, saying, God, I've never been successful in this before, but I hear your word, and I'm going to trust you. I'm going to trust you and that word you're giving me, that you are with me, and you're going to use me like I never thought you could.

How many here tonight would say, I am here, I'm asking God, I'm asking Jesus to come into my life. I may know like I know He lives in me, and the power of sin is being broken in me, and all the darkness that's in me is being replaced by your light. How many with an upraised hand will say, Teresa, that's me.

I want that life. I want life, instead of my darkness. There are going to be some people, they're going to meet with you downstairs, and they're going to pray with you.

And when you pray from your heart, a miracle happens. And Jesus Christ Himself comes in. The Son of God comes in and it's real.

And He changes you. He changed me. He will change you.

And you're going to have a new life. Be prepared to be radically changed, because Jesus is real. Jesus is God.

It's going to be major. How many tonight can say, Teresa, I'm Gideon. I know who I am, but I hear God tonight and He's saying, I am with you.

And I've decided it's going to be enough. I've decided that if God is telling me, I am with you, I'm going to stretch out my hand. I'm going to grab that crucified one.

I'm going to say, I want radical life, my Jesus. I want you to give me courage. I want you to change me.

You are real and it's got to show. If you are God and you live in me, it's going to come on the outside, and I'm going to believe you like I've never believed you before, because you are God. Those that are saying, I am Gideon and I know I come from a poor family.

I know there's not a lot there, but God, you're not looking at that. You still say you are with me and I give you my life. All of it.

Beloved, that doesn't mean that we'll never fail. It means that God says, get up, I am with you. Get up.

The sin doesn't count. Get up. I'm doing something deeper than you know.

Don't stop trusting. Don't stop trusting. You're going to see, I'm making you a man and a woman of power.

You're going to be like an army. You think you're standing alone? I'm going to make you an army. I'm going to make when you stand, people are going to be compelled to listen about Jesus in you.

They're going to be compelled to come to you and say, what is it you've got? I need it. Whatever you've got. And God's going to make you more than you are because you believed Him when He says, I am with you.

I am with you and it's going to be enough. It's enough to defeat the devil. It's enough to defeat every sin enough.

If we'll just stretch out our hand, say, God, you are enough. If you are with me, it is enough. He's done that for me.

He'll do this for you. In an awesome way. In an awesome way.

Right now, Pastor Patrick's going to come. He's going to do what he does. But beloved, I just want you to know, Jesus is real.

Jesus is God. He's radically transforming all of us. In this dark hour of time, when people think are cursing His name, I'll tell you something, the more you hear His name cursed, I'll tell you something, that's an indicator the devil is scared.

They have to throw His name out to keep intimidating us and keep us quiet. I'll tell you something, you stand up, you say, God, fill my mouth. God, fill me with love for them.

Drive out the fear. And I'll tell you something, you're going to see the power of God come through you and touch many, many lives around you. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Jesus is good. This is the conclusion of the message.

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