

Dear Friend,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and enjoying an outlook on life that only faith can provide. However, we are wise to take time to build up a reserve of truth to sustain us in this time. Jesus spoke of our present day, when fear will begin to dominate people's thoughts to the point that many will lose heart for the future. Some godly people may even give place to the thought that life, for them, has no more purpose or meaning.

For the child of God, nothing could be farther from the truth. Yes, we are in a storm, but so are multitudes who have neither the comfort nor eternal assurance that we know. There is still much good left for you to do on the earth. People need the tenderness and direction that only Christ's hands can give. He has chosen to touch others for good—through you. Never give in to despair.

May this letter be a great blessing and strength to you.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

## WHEN DEATH SEEMS LIKE A BETTER OPTION

by Carter Conlon

People go through secret inner struggles in life, and quite often it seems to them that nobody fully understands. Of course, part of the enemy's strategy is to keep these battles hidden—to keep those who are afflicted from reaching out for help.

At times, the struggles may intensify to the point where thoughts of death call out—even to the people of God. They begin to consider death as a reasonable solution and perhaps the only option left to escape their anguish. I have spoken to people who are seemingly happy but are battling an inner despair—a despair that seems to grow deeper and darker every day, and they do not know how they will ever escape. At some point, they begin to entertain the thought that it would be nice to get out of here, to finally just be finished with the struggles, the trials and the pain.

*When we get burnt out, all of our molehills become mountains.*

### ■ BURNOUT AND FAILURE

Many factors can give rise to these thoughts of death. For instance, it

may happen to someone who feels that he or she has failed to the point of no recovery. Consider Elijah—a great prophet of God who was zealous for truth. Elijah initially had a view of what he thought his life would accomplish and all that God was going to do through him. In light of this vision, he eventually reached a point where he felt that he had failed. The Scripture says that he went a day's journey into the wilderness—into a dark and lonely place. Nobody was there; nobody could help him. He sat down under a juniper tree and requested that he might die (see 1 Kings 19:4).

Notice first of all that Elijah was spiritually and physically burned out. When we get burnt out, all of our molehills become mountains. Things that we would be able to push aside easily when we are in a position of rest and strength suddenly become incredible mountains that we cannot seem to get over or around. Yet some of these things are simply physical factors that get hold of our lives when we are burnt out.

Prior to his escape to the wilderness, Elijah was on the top of Mt. Carmel, boldly taking a stand for what was right as he challenged all the prophets of Baal. Yet, following this great victory, at the threat of an evil queen, Elijah ran for his life. In other words, he covered before evil. Elijah knew the history of what

happens when God's people lose faith and courage, and at that point, he preferred to die rather than be counted among them.

***When you get tired and when you have failed, you may easily get the sense in your heart that God is angry with you.***

In the same way, there are believers today who, when they first came to Christ, had an image of what their life was going to look like. Oh, what a powerful testimony and what incredible strength they would have! Yet suddenly they found themselves overpowered or running from evil. A sense of hopelessness eventually entered their heart, and they concluded, "God, I am no better." That is what Elijah essentially said: "I am no better than the people who have come before me. Here I am fleeing from the voice of this evil queen. I am no better than the cowardice that I once stood against and the worship at the altars of Baal." And so he added, "Lord, just take my life now. I don't see any purpose to it."

Elijah was likely a man who feared the anger of God, for he had witnessed His judgment upon people and nations who disregarded the presence of the Lord. I imagine he must have been afraid when powerful manifestations suddenly broke out all around him—fire, an earthquake and wind. Yet the Bible tells us that God was not in any of these. How surprised Elijah must have been when a tender whisper suddenly came to him—a whisper that had the power to overshadow the roaring that was going on in his mind. This whisper came and told

him to take heart, for there was still much left for him to do. God was not angry with him after all.

I believe that the display on the mountain was God showing Elijah, "If I were angry with you because of your failure, as you think I should be, I would have destroyed you by now." Let this serve as a reminder for you as well. When you get tired and when you have failed, you may easily get the sense in your heart that God is angry with you. However, you must get away from that lie, for the Scripture simply does not bear witness to it. God said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" (see Jeremiah 31:3, Isaiah 49:16). When we fail, He picks us up. When we fall short, His arm of mercy is never short. When we will not forgive ourselves, He will forgive us. After all, when Jesus went to a cross on Calvary two thousand years ago, He did not go because you were strong. He went to the cross because He knew that you would never make it in your own strength. He knew that you needed a Savior.

***Do not forget the fact that we are in a spiritual battle.***

Sometimes part of the sense of failure is really just the result of pride—thinking we can do it on our own when, in fact, we cannot. If God dealt with us in the manner that we deserved, nobody would make it to heaven, for God's kingdom is a kingdom of mercy. So do not let the devil condemn you, telling you that you have somehow sinned away your day of grace and that your life is not worth living. That is simply not true. If it were, you would not even have the desire to get right with God.

### ■ SORROW OF LOSS

Thoughts of death as an option can also arise when the sorrow of loss in our lives has reached a point where the thought of living has lost all meaning. Consider the story in Luke: "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:12–16).

This woman had already lost her husband, and now she had lost her only son—her future, her hope. When we have lost something or somebody, our hearts can become so sorrowful that the thought of living without them becomes almost unbearable. "If I can't share life with this person, I would rather share death with them."

Jesus came into this situation and, full of compassion, said to the widow, "Weep not." Then He performed a miracle, and the dead was brought back to life. Of course that is not the way God is going to do it in every situation. Nevertheless, it is a picture of how the Lord is able to stop this procession of pain and sorrow. When Jesus spoke, the young man got up and began to speak. It was the voice of hope rising again.

Likewise, in spite of the pain or heartache that you have gone through or are perhaps experiencing today, God is able to cause a voice of hope to speak to your heart. You

must simply believe that He will. The Bible says that, “...*all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28). You may not be able to see much good in the moments when you are completely overwhelmed and despondency is building in your heart, but just remember that God is able to speak through even the greatest difficulty. Suddenly the voice of hope will come to you again.

***Satan’s ability to lie to your mind and to convince you that there is no reason to live is finished.***

■ **RECOGNIZING THE BATTLE**

Another reason why thoughts of death may come is because God has something significant intended for your life, so the devil has come against you with a fury. Do not forget the fact that we are in a spiritual battle. I have heard people sometimes say, “I don’t know what is wrong with me. I never struggled in my mind like this before I got saved. Even when I was out at bars and doing drugs, everything seemed to be fine. But now I am fighting hell in my mind!” Actually, that is the truth of the matter—you are fighting hell in your mind. It is not that you are deficient or that somehow you have entered an arena where nobody before you has ever gone. This is warfare, and you are fighting spiritual wickedness in high places. You are fighting the prince of the power of the air who hates the children of righteousness (see Ephesians 2:2). You are targeted and hated by darkness; therefore do not be surprised when your mind is flooded with such thoughts.

It is important, however, to remember that in Christ, you have been given the power to stand up and resist these things. One of the ways that you defeat them is to simply get up and say, “No!” In Christ, you have been given the power to stop this downward spiral of despair before it gets to the point of thinking about leaving this world. You do not have to succumb to hopelessness or continue to give in to wrong reasoning. Jesus offers healing and freedom from all captivity and thoughts of despair.

As a child of God, you have the power to say, “From now on, no farther. No more of these thoughts!” Rather than sitting and continuing to mull over your depressing situation, get into the Word of God and begin to set your mind upon whatsoever is pure, whatsoever has virtue, whatsoever is lovely, whatsoever is of good report (see Philippians 4:8). Read the stories of those who went through impossible situations and somehow found the strength of God to fight against odds that could not have been won in any amount of natural strength.

***Not only are you going to get out of this, you are going to do great damage to the kingdom of darkness along the way.***

If you do not make the choice to stand up and resist the lies, you constantly will be dragging yourself through sorrow, and there will never seem to be any meaning or purpose in your life.

It is time to take authority in the name of Jesus over every lie of the devil, over every power of evil, over every weapon formed against any righteous child of God. We must tread upon these things and bring them under the soles of our feet, appropriating the victory of the cross. Jesus said, “It is finished,” so that means the power of hell is completely finished! Satan’s ability to lie to your mind and to convince you that there is no reason to live is finished.

You may not fully realize it today, but you are a great threat to the kingdom of darkness. The majority of society is feeling what you have had to go through or what you may be experiencing today. But you know something that unsaved people do not know—that God is going to keep you and use you for His purposes. Not only are you going to get out of this, you are going to do great damage to the kingdom of darkness along the way. You are going to trust God for the power to recognize everyone who has ever struggled just as you do. And by God’s grace, you are going to be used of the Lord to pull them out; you will be used as a key to unlock their prison doors.

Even a simple word can make a difference when it comes from a vessel that is anointed by the Spirit of God. It may just be something soft spoken to a heart that is losing hope. God spoke softly to Elijah and lifted him out of his despair, and then Elijah went on to anoint kings and do great good in the earth. The Lord carried him on the journey and gave him a friend named Elisha.

It is important that you do not try to make this journey alone. We all need a friend with whom we can share our heart and pray. It does not mean you must burden that person with all of your woes. However, one of the greatest ways to expose the works of darkness is to simply have somebody

you can talk to—someone with discernment who can recognize, “Ah, no, that’s the devil!” And sometimes that is the end of it. One wise word is often all that you need in order to stop listening to the lies.

***When the devil tries to come against you, reminding you of all your woes, begin to speak aloud: “My life is worth living. God has a marvelous plan for me!”***

#### ■ THE ONLY DEATH TO CONSIDER

We see in the Scriptures that even Paul and some of his companions reached a point of great despair. *“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life”* (2 Corinthians 1:8). They were fighting the good fight of faith, only to find that their own strength had reached its limits. Suddenly hopelessness came knocking on the door.

*“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead”* (2 Corinthians 1:9). This is the only reasonable death that we as people of God should ever consider: that we be willing to die

to our own strength, die to our own plans, die even to our own sense of hopelessness. Rather, we put our trust in the One who raises the dead, yielding everything we have into His hands, calling out to Him to take over and manifest His life in us. That is the only death that is an option for a child of God.

The Lord is going to use you for His glory and His purposes in this generation, but you must have the courage to believe that your life is worth living. When the devil tries to come against you, reminding you of all your woes, begin to speak aloud: “My life is worth living. God has a marvelous plan for me!”

Remember, no weapon formed against you shall prosper, and you shall condemn every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord (see Isaiah 54:17). That means that you have a right to shake off the heavy bands and speak to that hopelessness and darkness. You can speak to that parade of sorrow, saying, “In the name of Jesus, the Son of God, you are not going to take away my future. You are not going to take away my hope; you are not stealing my song!”

As you do so, not only will you see the despair broken off of your life, but off of the lives of those whom God will bring your way to minister to in the days ahead. Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon  
©2012 Times Square Church

#### CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

#### TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

**Founding Pastor**  
David Wilkerson

**Senior Pastor**  
Carter Conlon

**Tel:**  
212-541-6300

**Fax:**  
212-541-6415

**Church Location:**  
237 West 51st Street  
Between Broadway & 8th Avenue

**Mailing Address:**  
1657 Broadway, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10019

**e-mail:**  
info@timesquarechurch.org

#### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

tscnyc.org

This newsletter is an edited version of “WHEN DEATH SEEMS LIKE A BETTER OPTION” a sermon given on June 17, 2012 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at [tscnyc.org](http://tscnyc.org). You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.