

Dear Friend,

I hope this letter finds you well and spiritually hungry. I believe I can truthfully declare that is the condition of Times Square Church as we approach our twenty-fifth year of ministry here in New York City. We have had many challenges during this quarter of a century but by the grace of God we have come through intact and still spiritually alive. The prayer meetings are explosive with faith and we are undertaking some of the largest missions endeavors in the history of this church.

In truth I must say that we have not always done everything the best way it could have been done. Nevertheless, as Abraham did, we move forward with a sincere desire to be faithful and to be an extension of the tender blessings of God on the earth.

That is the heart of this newsletter... MERCY. The Lord is kind to us and willing to keep us all standing as we choose to glorify Him in our generation. Though we may have faltered in some areas of our lives, He still remains faithful to raise us up as a testimony of His grace.

Take courage, for if you have a heart that still wants to love Him, you are a prime candidate both to receive and to be an ambassador of His mercy.

Stay safe and be assured...
Jesus loves you.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

MERCY by Carter Conlon

When we pray, it is essential that we pray with hearts of faith. We are not to merely shout into the atmosphere and expect an answer. Rather, we must know the character of the One to whom we are praying and understand that His heart is one of mercy. That way we can boldly approach the throne of grace to find help in this season of need that our nation is in.

Mercy is at the heart of everything God is and does.

God's heart of mercy is evident all throughout the Scriptures. In the book of Ezekiel, we read of the nation of Israel coming to a place of impending judgment. God's own people had grown casual and immoral; government officials were corrupt; prophets and priests were prophesying things out of their own minds, no longer hearing from the Lord. They were simply telling the people what would keep them happy and pacified, even though judgment was at the door (see Ezekiel 13).

The Lord said, "*And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none*" (Ezekiel 22:30). God was looking to give a reprieve, a season of mercy, but He could not find anyone.

I don't think the Lord was looking for somebody with mountainous faith or impeccable credentials in that generation. I think He was looking for somebody who simply would agree and understand that mercy is at the heart of everything God is and does.

Mercy is the reason the Lord did not destroy humanity in the Garden of Eden. Mercy is the reason why He left a family alive on the earth in the days of Noah. In His foreknowledge, God knew that you and I would be born into this world and had He destroyed it at any time prior to our being here today, we would have been lost to ever knowing life, to ever knowing God, to ever being part of the fellowship of the redeemed that will be around His throne for all eternity. God saw the loss, and because He is merciful, He stayed His hand.

■ I DESIRE MERCY

A Pharisee once approached the disciples of Jesus and asked, "*Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*" (Matthew 9:11). In other words, "Why does this Jesus, who claims an incredible proximity to God, waste His time hanging around those who have obviously fallen short of what we regard as the standards of godliness?" Keep in mind that the Pharisees were the ones who were supposed to represent the heart of God to their generation.

Though they were not speaking directly to Him, Jesus heard them

Religion without the heart of God becomes—a place where everybody feels judged.

and replied, “Go and learn what this means—I will have mercy and not sacrifice” (see Matthew 9:13). He was essentially saying, “I live on the side of mercy, but you pull back from the people and judge them by their ability to live according to your rules. You warn the people to taste not, touch not, handle not. You judge the weak; you judge those who might have pondered the things of God but ultimately walked away when they considered it too difficult.” That is exactly what religion without the heart of God becomes—a place where everybody feels judged.

Jesus later warned them, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*” The word hypocrite means “actors.” In other words, you are role playing what God looks like. “*...For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*” (Matthew 23:23).

Jesus was saying, “Woe to you, for you give to the work of God to a certain point as His representatives, but you hold back from the people the deeper matters: judgment, mercy and faith.” The law should have taught them that without God, they were all under the same judgment as the sinner who walks in the door. As Paul said, “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23).

We, too, must remember that we all deserve judgment. We stand in the sight of God by His favor and His

grace alone, for there is not one who is righteous. Seeing ourselves in this true light opens our hearts to the mercy of God.

Jesus said to the Pharisees and scribes, “If you had only recognized that you stand by mercy, then you would not have withheld this mercy from others. You would not be setting forth standards of outward holiness as examples of who God is, while withholding from the people what the law really teaches—that God is a God of mercy far beyond what our minds can fully understand.”

Knowing the judgment and mercy of God will ultimately bring us through to faith. When we truly see our own need and understand God’s willingness to miraculously supply what we lack, our hearts will be opened to believe that what God has done for us, He can do for others. He has shown us mercy, and He is willing to show others mercy. That is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

■ CAN THESE DRY BONES LIVE?

Later on in the book of Ezekiel, the prophet said, “*The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry*” (Ezekiel 37:1–2).

In a season of great trial, Ezekiel was taken out to a scene that strongly resembles our society today—parts were disjointed and disconnected, strewn across a valley. The Scripture calls it an “open valley,” which represents an open and unhidden trial. Not long ago, we were in a season when Wall Street was hitting all-time highs and many were prospering. At that time, people in trial were essentially hidden and pushed to the corners. But now we all are

in an open valley, and the grandeur of the mess in America has become apparent not only to us but to the entire world. Unfortunately, much of the church body is in a similar condition, captivated by the seductions of this world and left very dry. Many churches have lost the heart of God.

May I encourage you to do something? Would you simply tell the people around you what God is willing to do?

Just as the Lord asked Ezekiel, I believe the question He asks us today is: “Can the church in America live again?” That means the whole body of Jesus Christ—every denomination. Can we once again become a testimony to the life and power of Jesus Christ?

If you do not know the mercy of God, you will be swallowed by the impossibility—by the word of all the statisticians, the prognosticators, the naysayers and the pessimists who list all the reasons why it cannot happen. But I am here to tell you the one reason why it can happen, and it’s called the mercy of God in Jesus Christ! Mercy will touch our pastors and fill our churches once again throughout the nation. Mercy will cause the body of Christ to start feeding the hungry again. Mercy will bring the presence of the Lord back into our prayer meetings. It’s all mercy! I am not saying that the economy will look the same as it once did, for the kingdom of God is not about saving temporal sandcastles. It’s about saving people!

“Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live” (Ezekiel 37:4–5). The Lord was saying, “Ezekiel, tell them what I am willing to do. I will give you strength! I will cause you to be able to rise up again and live and know that I am the Lord.”

May I encourage you to do something? Would you simply tell the people around you what God is willing to do? Think of the people in your office, in your neighborhood, in the grocery store or in the streets. Don't hold back because of what you see with your eyes, for the kingdom we speak about cannot even be seen with the natural eye. Don't be caught in unbelief; don't be caught on the side of those who have lost heart. All through the Bible, we see people who claimed to know God, but they ultimately lost faith because they lost an understanding of His character. Recently I have had this cry: “Jesus, Your Name deserves better than this. I am coming to You not because of our righteousness, for we have not represented You the way that we should have. I recognize that we have nothing to present to You. Our schemes and plans have all failed and come to nothing. We cannot present any reason why You should do what we ask, other than the fact that we know who You are—we know Your character. We know that You are the God who did not destroy this world but instead sent Your Son to die on a cross. We know that Jesus did not come because He felt some legal obligation to redeem us—He came because He is a God of mercy!”

■ CALL OUT TO THE BREATH OF GOD

The Lord then said to Ezekiel, *“Prophecy unto the wind...Come from*

the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (Ezekiel 37:9–10).

Pray and call out to the Holy Spirit; call out to the breath of God! There is no other strategy, no other power in this world. There is nothing else that will make any difference; nothing else that will be able to take down all the weapons that have been built against the testimony of Christ in our generation. We are not going to be revived by a new superstar emerging on the horizon. No, enough of that! Call out to the breath of God! Call out for God's Holy Spirit to invade His house and His people once again.

No matter what area in your life is dead, it is time to get up and say, “God, breathe on me again!”

It is time to gather with one heart and one prayer: Holy Spirit, come! Come to the Baptists, the Methodists, the Lutherans, the Catholic charismatics, the Presbyterians, the Salvation Army—all the churches in our cities! Give us the strength to pray and to work together, recognizing that there are no big or small people in the kingdom of God—we are all equally important. Help us to realize that nobody can do this alone; we need the whole body of Jesus Christ. Yes, we are allowed our distinctives, our differences, in worship style, for those things are inconsequential. What is important is that Christ is in the heart of His Bride one more

time and we stand together to make a difference in our generation.

“Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts” (Ezekiel 37:11).

The testimony of the people was: We have lost strength, and there is no living water flowing through us anymore. We can barely stand and get through our own trials and weaknesses, so how can we possibly believe for something greater than our own struggles? We are too far away to even get back to that place of faith.

How many people in the body of Christ have a similar testimony today? Yet we can still take heart, as we see in the Lord's response to Ezekiel:

“Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord” (Ezekiel 37:12–14).

In the same way, the Lord promises to regather us even from the grave—from places of death where the stone has been rolled away and we have lost heart. God says that He will regather us from these places where we have made peace with death, and the life of Christ will be ours once again. It all has to start in the church of Jesus Christ. A spiritual awakening is not going to simply come to the

streets and leave us behind sealed graves. No, it happens in the church first! That has always been the pattern of God.

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No matter what area in your life is dead, it is time to get up and say, “God, breathe on me again! I give up—I am dry—I am dead. I cannot do this on my own. I cannot change the way I am; I cannot love the people around me; I cannot forgive those who have hurt me; I cannot stand up and speak with boldness. I am done trying!” I believe that is when suddenly all of heaven stands up and begins to rejoice—because finally there is another dead man whom Jesus can bring back to life. And the moment He does, the moment mercy floods your heart and faith begins to explode inside of you, it becomes easy to believe for others.

In this hour, I want to be a testimony of the mercy and glory of God. That is my message, and that must be your message. There are no how-to’s, no seven steps, no pamphlets to pass out. It is you and me going out to tell people what God has done in our lives—how merciful He has been! At the very core of our testimony is the understanding that what God

has done in my life, He is willing and able to do in yours. Where God has taken me, God can take you. The healing that He brought into my life, He can bring into yours. It is all mercy! You can give me all your reasons why this nation cannot be revived, but I do not believe one of them, for I know who God is—He is a God of mercy!

Rise up, body of Jesus Christ! Rise up out of your graves, rise up out of weakness, rise up out of death and captivity! Rise up and let God be a God of mercy to you and to this generation! Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon
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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.

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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	

This newsletter is an edited version of “MERCY” a sermon given on August 26, 2012 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at 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.