

Dear Friend,

This morning while I was reading the book of Exodus, it occurred to me that today we are in a situation very similar to what the people of God once had to face. Exodus 1:8–10 says, in part: *"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said to his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them..."* Sidetracked, dominated and convinced that change was hopeless, they forgot that they were a people who had access to the power of God.

Psalm 107 clearly tells us that when casual prayer turns to a heartfelt cry for freedom and deliverance, God will hear and answer. Our weaponry is clearly not carnal but spiritual, to the *"...pulling down of strong holds... and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God..."* (2 Corinthians 10:4–5).

Begin to pray. Pray in your home, your church and everywhere else you can. Ask Jesus to glorify His name and save a multitude of those who are lost. Do it now!

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

A GUIDING VOICE IN THE STORM by Carter Conlon

It is becoming evident that a spiritual awakening is our only lasting hope for the future of our nation. America once was given great favor by God and although our history has not been perfect, the essence of our law was founded on the Judeo-Christian ethic. We had at least a measure of respect for the Word of God and an understanding of His ways of dealing with those who had gone before us. Yet over the years, we began to ignore the warnings of God and embarked on a journey led by our own senses and our own reasoning. We find a similar situation in the book of Acts: *"Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul... And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete"* (Acts 27:9–11, 13).

Paul had warned the captain and crew from the onset that this journey would end in destruction, only to be ignored and relegated to the bottom of the ship. Similarly, we have disregarded the revealed knowledge of Almighty God and, casting off moral restraint, proceeded to set sail in our own

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direction. We turned to praise the gods of silver and gold, wood and stone—things originating from the minds of men. If that were not tragedy enough, the Church in large measure followed the course of society and became attached to the value system of this world. This has left us with theological perspectives focusing on prosperity and success that have tremendously weakened the testimony of Christ in our nation.

■ CASTING OUT THE TACKLING

"But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive" (Acts 27:14–15). Just like those on the ship with Paul, we arrogantly set our course against the ways of God and now we find ourselves in a storm, facing circumstances beyond our control. We are being driven by the wind with seemingly no direction and no moral compass.

In the ferocity of a storm, people are willing to do things that they would not do under normal circumstances.

“Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship” (Acts 27:17–19).

For years we have done our best to hold this country together. Now, out of desperation, we are beginning to cast overboard the tackling of the ship. The tackling represents certain standards that were once bedrock in this nation, such as the sacred right of unborn children in the womb to live. I am not a doctor, and I am not suggesting there may not be circumstances that need to be considered. But when we begin to murder our unborn children for the sake of convenience, we have crossed a line, which is terrifying at the least. Not only that, we have cast out the sanctity of marriage as defined by God from the beginning of time. God designed one man and one woman to be joined and to be fruitful in the earth. Yet now it seems that anything goes. It doesn't matter if the Bible calls it evil; we are now calling it good.

Very soon we might even have to deal with the throwing overboard of the right of free speech and self-government, all in favor of a new morality. In the ferocity of a storm, people are willing to do things that they would not do under normal circumstances. When they

have already lost their spiritual moorings and fear begins to set in, they will throw almost anything overboard in favor of what is believed to be safety and security.

This is precisely why the role of the Church is so pivotal at this juncture in history. We have before us a window of opportunity to be a guiding voice in the storm. It is a window that I feel will be open for only a short season, which is why we must be prepared now.

■ READY FOR THE CALL

Paul was ready when the call came to him. He had been in the bottom of the ship, praying in the midst of his own struggles and fighting through his own belly of hell. All along, Paul knew that he was being carried on this journey by the spiritual ignorance of those who refused to heed the Word of God.

That is why it is so essential that you and I be in prayer now. We must get a word from God!

Imagine the taunting of the enemy that he had to fight. “This is hopeless, Paul! Your life is not going to amount to anything. How are you ever going to affect this journey or this generation? Do you really think that anyone on this ship will listen to you? Just go ahead and get bitter. Get vengeance on those who have caused this ignorant journey!” Yet, despite the hardship and the battles Paul faced in the belly of that ship, he chose to pray. Suddenly, in the midst of all the difficulty, a window opened. He was called to the deck of the ship, and the people were ready to listen.

What would have happened if Paul had not been ready when the

call came? What if he had been down there grumbling with the rest of the prisoners—if his whole focus had been on himself and his own security? If that had been so, Paul probably would have stood on the deck with no more hope or encouragement than anybody else around. He may have had some ideas, but he would not have had the mind or the word of God for those who desperately needed it. That is why it is so essential that you and I be in prayer now. We must get a word from God! He will speak if we are willing to listen and set aside our own ideas about what our future should be.

Paul was willing to listen, and as a result, the Lord gave him this word of exhortation for those on the ship: *“For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me” (Acts 27:23–25, NKJV).*

Although the lives of the 276 would be spared, notice that it was not an entirely pleasant word that God gave to Paul. God was essentially telling him, “You are going to go through the storm. You are going to remain in chains and be brought before Caesar, a man who thinks he is god. But you will stand before him and testify of the one true God in heaven and in earth.”

Paul embraced this call on his life, despite what it would cost him personally. He was intent on living to glorify Christ and reach the lost. This, of course, is where it gets hard. We all love to come into the Lord's presence to receive something—perhaps peace, deliverance, direction, a word of encouragement. But what happens when the Lord says, “I want you

to embrace My burden for a lost society and yield your body as a living sacrifice to My plan, even though it may cost you personally?”

It is a battle that we all have to go through, for not one of us wants to be inconvenienced. We do not particularly like the thought of following the journey of Paul—the hardship and the difficulty that often results from choosing to fully embrace Christ. However, I want to suggest to you that nothing else will make a difference in this generation. We have had seminars, radio shows, television programs, conferences—yet our society is going to hell in a handbasket. What we have presented to this country has not worked. In fact, it has sent this generation in an entirely adverse direction. It is time to put aside these things and return to prayer and to the embracing of the will of God for our lives.

■ A COMPELLING TESTIMONY

As he stood on the deck of that ship, Paul’s life was a compelling testimony of the keeping power of God. He clearly possessed an inner strength that was supernatural, and he was filled with the absolute joy of being fully surrendered to Jesus Christ. It must have provoked those traveling on that vessel with him to stand in amazement and wonder, “What makes this man so confident? He is in the same predicament we are, yet he seems to be so full of hope! Why does he see a future when we see destruction? What is inside this man that makes him different from us?”

Paul’s life moved those around him to consider the ways and the work of God. That is what the Church is supposed to be—a compelling testimony to this world. Jesus once used a parable to illustrate this idea: “Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper

time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse” (Luke 14:16–18).

Most historians relate this initial group of people to Israel—the Jewish people. We know from the Scriptures that they will respond eventually, but for a season they will refuse to come to the Lord at His invitation.

The master then said to the servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind” (Luke 14:21).

This is thought to represent the three years of Jesus Christ’s public ministry on the earth. He focused on the lame, the poor, the maimed and the blind, inviting them into the house of God. In those days, such people would not have had access to the holy place. But through Jesus Christ, an entrance was made for all people to come into the presence of God.

We have tried putting coffeemakers in the back of our churches. But in reality, it is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone who draws people!

“And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:22–23).

Most historians agree that this represents our present church age. That means that your life and mine should be a compelling testimony.

We ought to present to this generation irrefutable evidence of the reality of Christ, alive within us.

This is exactly what happened in the second chapter of Acts. Ordinary people went into the presence of God and prayed in one accord, even though it was an unpopular time. Jesus had just been crucified, and the crowd outside was intent on killing all followers of Christ. The one hundred and twenty in that Upper Room would have known the dangers of identifying themselves as His disciples. Nevertheless, they chose to pray and obey as God began to unfold to them a plan for each of their lives—not their plan, His plan. And so they came out of that Upper Room just as Paul had come out of the belly of that ship—completely gripped by God. Their lives, their hearts, and their speech were all undeniable evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit to transcend the natural borders of their humanity. They stood in the midst of that society, boldly declaring that there is a God who did die, who did rise from the dead and who does inhabit His people. As a result, at least three thousand in that anti-Christ crowd stood in amazement and asked, “What must we do to have that kind of relationship with God?”

Note that a casual Christianity will not elicit this kind of response, as has been made evident in our generation. We have tried putting coffeemakers in the back of our churches. We have done surveys, built bowling alleys and swimming pools, and held parties and potlucks, assuming that this would bring people into the kingdom of God. But in reality, it is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone who draws people! Oh, the foolishness of this church age!

Do we have the courage to examine ourselves in this hour; to admit that our ways may not be God’s ways; that our plans might not be God’s

plans? Do we have the courage, as Daniel did, to open the window, face Jerusalem, and pray in humility (see Daniel 6:10)? “Lord, we have done a disservice to Your testimony in the earth. We have not brought about deliverance, because we have dealt casually with the holy things of God. We have failed to come into Your presence and seek Your will, to walk in the holiness that You require of Your people.”

God is calling His Church everywhere to go back to prayer; to have a willingness to stand no matter what may come.

■ GET THE VICTORY NOW

Despite our foolishness as a church age, the window to Jerusalem is still open, just as it was in Daniel’s day. The window to God’s power, provision, and mercy is still open if He can find a people who are willing to get on their knees and say, “Lord, whatever it costs, I am asking You to use my life for Your glory. Help me to walk righteously, for I know that You do not answer the prayers of people who regard iniquity in their heart. Help me to turn from sin and to do what is right. Help me to stand in the marketplace, not as a coward, but as a believer filled with your Holy Spirit, standing and making an open declaration of what is right and what is true. Help me to walk in the supernatural, that I might be a guiding voice in the storm.”

God is calling His Church everywhere to go back to prayer; to have a willingness to stand no matter what may come. And here is where it starts: Get the victory now!

Paul got his victory before he appeared on that deck, for he had been at the bottom of the ship, praying. He had found victory—not from his situation, but rather in his situation. His situation did not necessarily change, but his heart, his mind and his perspective did. Remember that when he was brought up on deck, he was still a captive. He was still in chains, still being led on the journey to stand before Caesar. Nevertheless, he stood in absolute victory!

Likewise, you must get the victory now. Get the victory over whatever sin is captivating you; get the victory over a divided heart. Get the victory now so that you will have the courage to go all the way with God, with a single focus on glorifying Christ and saving the lost. Be prepared to hear from God, and be willing to yield to His plan for your life. As you do so, the Lord will be faithful to provide you with all that you need to finish the journey in a manner that will bring glory to Him alone. He will give you hope when those around you are in despair, and He will cause you to become a guiding voice in the storm. Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon
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CARTER CONLON

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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	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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