

Greetings!

My name is Kate Hughes. I am Director of Feed New York, an initiative of Times Square Church.

I am writing this letter while looking out our office window in New York. It's raining. People are running down Broadway huddled under umbrellas and newspapers. I watch as one man, seemingly oblivious to the rain, slowly pushes a grocery cart filled with plastic bottles down the street. On every block, he stops and checks through the garbage cans on the corner. His eyes never look up.

I am suddenly reminded why Pastor Carter felt the burden of the Lord to begin Feed New York. God has not forgotten this man.

The vision God has given for Feed New York is big. Here is the short list:

- Feed the hungry
- Bring churches together
- Offer everything for free with no strings attached
- Start warehouses
- Build greenhouses
- Spark prayer meetings

The list goes on!

I am thrilled to be a part of something like this. I would love for you to be part of it as well. We need your support to continue. To learn more, visit us at feednewyork.org.

Sincerely,

Kate

PRESSING INTO FEARFUL PLACES

by Carter Conlon

The book of Second Kings speaks of a time when the Syrian army surrounded Samaria in the northern part of Israel and cut off the city's food supply. This resulted in an intense famine in the land, bringing people to a point of such desperation that they resorted to cannibalism.

Have you ever noticed that when things go wrong, people tend to blame God and His people? That is exactly what happened in this case. The king of Israel became infuriated at the prophet Elisha, threatening to take off his head because of the unspeakable hardship that had come upon the city. By the time the king appeared before Elisha, he was so weak that he had to lean on the messenger who was with him.

It is a strange affliction of humanity that we just cannot bring ourselves to go into unfamiliar places.

The word of God then came to them through Elisha: *"Thus saith the Lord, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria"* (2 Kings 7:1). In other words, within twenty-four hours, provision would be available at such a cheap price that everybody would

be able to afford it. There would be a supply beyond their wildest imagination! Yet, what was the servant's response to this incredible news? *"Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof"* (2 Kings 7:2).

What a tragedy! Can you think of a more pitiful spiritual condition than seeing the provision of God right before your eyes but not being able to partake of it? That is exactly what unbelief does. It locks us out of the incredible provision of God.

Imagine, for example, that you were given a free ticket to one of the finest restaurants in town. You have the privilege of going in and ordering anything on the menu that you would like. The food is delicious beyond belief and will surely satisfy your deepest hunger. So you go down to the restaurant and stand on the street corner, peering through the window. You see all the people eating inside, and indeed the food looks good. But you are still on the other side of the window.

Somehow it is a strange affliction of humanity that we just cannot bring ourselves to go into unfamiliar places. Instead, we begin to think of all the reasons why we cannot go in and claim what was freely put into our hands. Will I be embarrassed when it becomes obvious that I

have never been in a place like this before? What if I get inside and nobody serves me? What if I find out my ticket is not valid? How will I pay? And so we remain on the outside, looking in.

■ OUTSIDE OF THE PROMISED LAND

Sadly, that is how many people approach the Scriptures. They see what God says in His Word, they can quote His promises, they can sing about His faithfulness—but the question is, do they truly believe what He spoke? Oftentimes a deep, embedded fear remains in their heart, so they come up with a myriad reasons as to why they cannot claim the inheritance of God.

The only thing that we have to face is fear—the fear of change, the fear of rejection, the fear of God calling us to an arena that we are not familiar with.

We find a similar response in the book of Numbers when Moses commissioned twelve men to spy out the Promised Land. *“And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs...And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of*

the children of Israel...and brought back word unto them...and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there” (Numbers 13:23–28).

The spies came back and essentially said, “What God said is true. We saw the provision, and indeed it is a land that flows with milk and honey!” However, not only did they see this incredible provision, they also saw the walled cities, the weaponry, the sons of the giants. As a result, ten of the spies focused on all the reasons why this Promised Land could not be theirs.

Now I want you to draw a parallel to the way we read the Word of God. You and I are always faced with a choice. We can see God’s provision and say, “Yes, it is there. It is true, and it is mine. I am going in to get my full inheritance!” Or we can stand there and say, “I see it; God’s promises are clear. But my parents told me I was useless. My teacher said I would never amount to anything. I don’t have much of an education. God, You know I am facing the giants. I see Your promises, but can’t I just admire them from afar? Surely You understand how limited my strength is and how big the obstacles are. Are You really offended if I choose to stay on the street and just look in the window?”

■ IT HAS ALREADY BEEN PAID FOR

Years ago, I received a complimentary dinner for four to one of the finest restaurants in the city. I saved it and took my father and mother there for their fiftieth anniversary. The maitre d’ sat us in one of the best

booths, and we were presented with a menu offering an extensive array of dishes, listed at incredible prices.

When it came time to order, the poor waiter almost choked when my father said, “I would like a hamburger patty, mashed potatoes and gravy, and no vegetables.” My father was a miner, so he was accustomed to eating that way and was somewhat fearful of change. I remember how flustered he got when the waiter broke the news to him that they didn’t serve hamburger patties there.

How many of us do the very same thing, despite the fact that the Lord has set an incredible “menu” before us? “I’ll have a hamburger patty, please,” we say, when God says we can be an evangelist. God offers us the privilege of daily partaking of His very own life; of being led to places that are beyond the familiar; of experiencing something that is deeper than anything we have ever known. It is all available as part of our inheritance in Christ.

Jesus once told His disciples, *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you”* (John 16:12–15).

Jesus was saying, “The Holy Spirit is going to come to you; He will take what is Mine and show it to you because it is yours!” We now know that Jesus was referring to all that was purchased on the cross of Calvary. In other words, “I am giving you a ticket to everything that I have bought for you on the cross. I am giving you entrance

into the victory that I won; every promise in the Bible is yours. The freedom, the vision, the healing, the supernatural empowerment of God to do the impossible—it is all yours!” However, although this is freely available to us as the children of God, we still must press in to lay hold of it.

Faith takes us to places where only faith can sustain us.

■ LAYING HOLD OF GOD'S PROVISION

Continuing from our opening text in Second Kings, we see that the day did come when God made provision available, thus fulfilling the word He had spoken through the prophet Elisha. How exactly did He do it?

It all began with four lepers sitting outside the city gate finally coming to the conclusion, “Well, there’s no point in staying here! We are going to starve. We might as well go into the camp of the Syrians” (see 2 Kings 7:3–4). As the four of them headed down toward the enemy’s camp, the Lord made their footsteps sound like an approaching army, striking such fear into the Syrian army that they immediately fled. When the lepers arrived at the camp, they could barely believe what they saw—food everywhere, campfires still burning, horses still tied to their posts. Everything their hearts desired was right there before them!

Moved with compassion, the lepers gave word to the city’s gatekeepers about their discovery, and provision was eventually unlocked to the entire city. *“And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word*

of the Lord. And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him” (2 Kings 7:16–17). The king’s servant, the one who hesitated and refused to believe the word of the Lord, was run over and trampled to death. May that never become the story of any of the King’s servants today!

On the other hand, we see that a group of people pressed through to this promise of provision—just as multitudes have done over the years. Think about all who have pressed in and found the power of God—the weak who have been made strong; those who couldn’t put two words together who went on to become great preachers of the gospel; those who were once despairing and ended up bringing hope to others!

Even the early church, as frail and feeble as you and I, walked into the camp of Jesus’ victory and found incredible provision. Those 120 disciples must have been aware that stepping out of that Upper Room could have meant death for some of them. Nevertheless, they were willing to press in to that fearful place. They knew that something had been purchased for them on the cross, and they were determined to get it. The words that Jesus had spoken to them must have come back to their mind—that the Comforter was going to come to them, take the victory that Christ won, and show it to them because it was theirs for the asking.

I can picture these men and women rising up to possess what was theirs, as if they were walking straight into the Promised Land. They went in to lay hold of the resources of God that they needed—boldness, love, a willingness to lay down their lives, if necessary, for the sake of His

glory. And when they came out of that Upper Room, the disciples were clothed in righteousness and the power of God. They had new minds, courage in place of fear, vision where they once saw only their own frailty. As they stepped out into the public sphere, the 120, gripped by the power of God, overthrew the whole known world of their time. Even Peter, who had previously denied Jesus out of fear, preached a sermon that moved at least three thousand people to give their lives to Christ. This early church had clearly taken possession of their inheritance of the incredible provision of God!

As you make the choice to press in to these fearful places, people’s futures will be changed.

■ GET UP AND GO IN

The good news that I have for you today is: Nothing has changed! The provision of God is still available; the Promised Land in Christ is still ours. The strength and ability of God to take us into His life is still there. The only thing that we have to face is fear—the fear of change, the fear of rejection, the fear of God calling us to an arena that we are not familiar with. But that is what faith is all about. Faith does not take us to where we are comfortable or can manage in our own strength. No! Faith takes us to places where only faith can sustain us.

You and I must have a willingness to press in to these fearful places. Perhaps the fearful place for you means getting out of a cocoon of security or out of a relationship that you know is wrong. It may simply begin by getting out of where you shouldn’t be so that

you can get to where you should be. Whatever the case, we must get to the point in our lives where we say, “Enough staring in the window, I am going in the door. I don’t care what people think. I have a paid ticket to the provision of God, so I am going in. I am going to sit at the finest table, and I am going to order everything on the menu!”

Get up and go in, for there is a miraculous life available to all who are willing to claim it.

That is who we are in Christ, and we must not settle for less in this hour! This generation deserves to have a glorious Church; this generation deserves to have a witness and a testimony—a people who have pressed in to fearful places and laid hold of the strength of God in Jesus Christ. It is time we rise up and say, “I am not settling for mediocrity when God has called me to glorify the Name of Jesus Christ on the earth. I am not going to let the devil destroy my family when God said that if I believe, not only I but my household would be saved; that if I fear the Lord and walk in His commandments, my seed would be mighty on the earth. I am not settling for less than my inheritance. I am going to press in by faith and prayer, knowing that everything in this Bible is mine!”

As you make the choice to press in to these fearful places, people’s futures will be changed. There will be people at the throne of God who will put their arms around your neck and say, “Thank you for standing up in the workplace. I would not have known Christ if you hadn’t. Thank you for coming to me in my poverty. Thank you for being a visible demonstration of God to me!”

So get up and go in—that was the message of Elisha, and that is the word of the Lord to you today. Get up and go in, for there is a miraculous life available to all who are willing to claim it. 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	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

tscnyc.org

This newsletter is an edited version of “PRESSING INTO FEARFUL PLACES,” a sermon given on **January 15, 2013** 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.