

Dear Friend,

I am so thankful to have the privilege of sending these newsletters as a way of encouraging you. Over the years voices of strength and consolation have been used of God to keep me steady on what sometimes seemed to be an overwhelming journey.

One time in particular, as a young believer in Christ, I felt that the way forward was hopeless. The company and assurance of a mature and seasoned Christian friend steadied me and brought my thinking back in line with the truth of God's promises to keep me. I am forever grateful for that moment!

I often envision someone like you opening this message and receiving the same strength that I once was given. If that is so, I consider it a great joy to my heart. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

## NOT SO FAST, GOLIATH, NOT SO FAST!

by Carter Conlon

*"Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle... And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together... And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass... He stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together"* (1 Samuel 17: 1-5, 8-10).

Our present moment in history is very similar to the time in which the Israelites were living when they faced this situation. Remember, they were the people of God, called to represent Him in the world. The miraculous didn't belong to the Philistines, it belonged to Israel, who had personally witnessed God's power and deliverance. Earlier in 1 Samuel, we read of some of the previous victories they had, even under King Saul: "So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against

*the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them"* (1 Samuel 14:47).

## ***How is it that God's people end up powerless before the taunts of the enemy?***

Yet now as they faced Goliath, the Scripture tells us that "When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (1 Samuel 17:11). Isn't that amazing? After a record of incredible victories and of God's faithfulness, the Israelites now stood trembling under one voice that cried, "I defy you!" Threatened by a challenge that would make them servants to godlessness, they had no spirit or will to fight back. It was as if they had forgotten why God had left them in the earth in the first place—to be a testimony and a blessing; a visible display of the power of God.

### ■ HOW WE END UP POWERLESS

How is it that God's people end up powerless before the taunts of the enemy? We find a clue when David, who became king after Saul, said, "And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul" (1 Chronicles

## ***We must drop all the foolishness that is masquerading as the presence of God and get back into the prayer meeting again.***

13:3). In Saul's victory days, when it seemed as if nobody could stand against the Israelites, the people of God put away the prayer meeting. The Ark was the presence of God, representing His forgiveness, mercy, power and provision. Yet they put it away and began to walk in their own strength, only to find themselves facing a giant that they could not contend with. We might rightfully say that God's order was breaking down, and another order was threatening to take its place.

Similarly, the Church of Jesus Christ in this country has had her share of past victories, yet today we see God's order rapidly breaking down as another order comes to take its place. If you don't realize how ominous this is, very shortly you will. It is time for the Church of Jesus Christ to get back to the Ark of God! We must drop all the foolishness that is masquerading as the presence of God and get back into the prayer meeting again.

### ■ REJECTING THE FULL IMAGE OF GOD

The Scriptures point to another reason why the people of God end up powerless. Paul explains it in his letter to the Romans: *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them... When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations,*

*and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man..."* (Romans 1:18–19, 21–23).

The problem is not that people don't have truth—they just don't value it. It is not that people do not study it, they refuse to wholeheartedly embrace it. They do not want what truly represents the glory and full image of God to be made manifest, so they change the image of God into the image of man. In other words, they fashion a more palatable Jesus and ultimately discernment is lost.

What happens to a nation when the Church is backslidden to this degree—when she has lost her voice and is virtually cast out as a nonplayer while society marches farther and farther away from godliness?

## ***The final step of reprobation in a nation is when we will not do it ourselves, but we will be entertained by others who do.***

*"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator... For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,*

*God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient"* (Romans 1:24–28).

Consider how accurately Paul's description seems to fit of the society in which we currently live: *"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them"* (Romans 1:29–32).

Not only do they do these things while claiming to possess some measure of the truth, they take pleasure in those who do them, as well. In other words, they settle for a vicarious enjoyment of sin through other people's lives. They watch television and movies, content to be entertained by fornicators, liars, murderers and thieves. According to one commentator, the final step of reprobation in a nation is when we will not do it ourselves, but we will be entertained by others who do.

As the people of God have seemingly retreated into a place of powerlessness today, the voice of godlessness is rising once again. Remember that in his taunts, Goliath said to the armies of Israel, "If you cannot put somebody forward to fight this battle and win, then you will be our servants." That means that unless we get back to the prayer meeting—unless we embrace truth once again and allow ourselves to be empowered by the Spirit of God—we will become servants to godlessness, and the freedoms in the house of God ultimately will be lost. Sharing the burden to see people set free from sin, from homosexuality, and

other lifestyles that are a robbery of what God intended them to be, will soon be considered hate speech. I feel we are not very far from the day that it will be against the law.

And so, in a time when it might cost somebody something to stand up and face the giant, we must ask ourselves: Who will have the courage to fight?

### ■ THE SECRET BATTLES

There is only one solution: God must have a people who are fearless because they have personally experienced His supernatural power in unseen places. That was the case with a young man named David.

The Bible tells us that David went to Saul and said, “...*Let no man’s heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine*” (1 Samuel 17:32). “I will fight! You all have the training and the armor, yet you have lost touch with God! You are no longer gripped with a passion to see the glory of God revealed in the earth again, to see captivated souls set free.”

“*And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth*” (1 Samuel 17:33). It was as if the devil was now using Saul to try to discourage faith from coming into the battle again. “Look how small you are, you are only a kid. How are you ever going to stand up against this giant?”

David essentially replied, “While I was keeping my father’s sheep, along came a lion and a bear. They took a lamb out of my flock—a lamb I was given by my father to keep. So I went after them, smote them and delivered the lamb. And when the lion rose up against me, I grabbed hold of its mane. The Spirit of God came upon me, and I killed this lion! I won the victory over the lion and the bear, and now this godless Philistine who is standing up and challenging the honor of God will be just like

one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God” (see 1 Samuel 17:34–37).

## *It is faith alone that will win the battle.*

David had already witnessed the miraculous; he had already won battles in secret places. That is why I implore you—do not play games; do not pretend to be free if you are not! Go into that secret closet of prayer, lay hold of the victory of Christ and say, “Devil, you are not having my mind! You are not getting my heart or my home! I don’t care how big you are or how small I am in your sight. I have the Spirit of God upon me, and in the name of Jesus, I take authority over you!”

### ■ VICTORY BY FAITH ALONE

Finally consenting to let David fight, Saul then tried to fit David with his armor. Now Saul’s armor probably had some marks on it to which he could point and say, “Here is where I once won the victory.” In a similar manner, there are pastors who might say to me today, “Aren’t you a little extreme? After all, we tried these methodologies, and they worked. Our church grew from two hundred to four hundred!” I can agree, just as David could agree with Saul, that yes, there are nicks on your armor from some past victories.

Nevertheless, we now have come to a season when this armor will no longer suffice. It is faith alone that will win the battle. Imagine if David had approached the Philistine with a survey, saying, “Goliath, I’m sorry you are enraged against us, but what will it take to get you to come to our church? A nine-foot bed? A twenty-five foot swimming pool?” No! David had seen the miraculous power of God. He had won victories that were supernatural, partaking

of strength that could come only from the Lord. He had found some other weaponry.

Paul speaks of this weaponry in 2 Corinthians 10:4–5: “*(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*”

What was the imagination in this case? Goliath imagined that because of his size and experience, he would be victorious. Yet he failed to realize that he had exalted himself against the knowledge of God, and that all God required was somebody of faith to rise up again—somebody who was not playing carnal games in the house of God; somebody who had won battles that nobody else knew of.

David pressed past the threats and the scorn, just as we must not be hindered by the ridicule of the godless in this hour. “*Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied*” (1 Samuel 17:45). In other words, “You have defied God! You stand here with your boasts and your weaponry, claiming that you can make us servants to godlessness. But I want you to know that you are not standing against us, you are standing against God!”

“*This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee... and all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hands*” (1 Samuel 17:46–47). The battle is the Lord’s! We are not going to match you force for force, and we are not going to win this in the political arena.

We are going into the prayer closet, and we will come out strengthened by the Spirit of God!

***It is time  
to fight for  
what God has  
entrusted to  
us in this  
generation.***

*“And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone...” (1 Samuel 17:49–50).* In other words, David was not fighting with human strategy or effort. The only thing he had was complete dependence on God. He took off Saul’s armor and instead went to a brook and picked up five smooth stones. I don’t know how long those stones had been there before they were made smooth, but in a sense they were weapons that had been fashioned by the hand of God—just as we have been given the weapon of prayer, the weapon of being set apart, the weapon of embracing the Word to the point that it takes precedence over everything that this world is trying to tell us.

David went into the battle with only what had been given by the hand of God. We see this repeated over and over throughout the Scriptures—the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. God uses the Esthers and the Gideons; the barren wombs of Elisabeth and Hannah. The armies

of Israel knew this truth, but they didn’t believe it. They instead resorted to human reasoning and natural strategies. This, too, has been the great folly of the church in America today.

**■ IT IS TIME TO FIGHT**

God help us now, for these dark and ominous days require men and women of faith. I challenge you to win those secret battles now. Don’t hold on to areas of unsundered defeat in your own life. Learn to live for the honor of God rather than the preservation of self. Go into the prayer closet and fight it out in the strength of God. Do not let the devil have even an inch, concluding, “All right, he took one lamb. I have ninety-nine left—big deal! Who is going to notice?” No! Go after it, for this is essential in the school of faith. We must learn to say, “We give absolutely no ground to the devil!”

The time has come to stand and declare the Word of God unashamedly; to fight for those who are lost, for unborn children, for our families, for our marriages, for the future of this nation! It is time to fight for what God has entrusted to us in this generation. Be aware that as you and I rise up to face the challenges of our day, everything we naturally fear will start moving toward us to convince us that our faith in God is useless. But that is when we must continue to press forward in the power of God, looking these man-made giants straight in the eye, declaring, “Not so fast, Goliath! Not so fast!”

Carter Conlon  
©2013 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.

**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	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

**tscnyc.org**

This newsletter is an edited version of “NOT SO FAST, GOLIATH, NOT SO FAST!,” a sermon given on April 7, 2013 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.