

Dear Friend,

In Psalm 85:6, the psalmist cries out, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" Spiritual awakening among God's people has been an often repeated plea to counter the increasing forces of darkness. The promise of healing and restored joy (as in 2 Chronicles 7:14) comes with a certain heart attitude among those who are serious about spiritual restoration. Humility, prayer, renewed seeking of God and a turning from wickedness have always been the hallmarks of such a moment in history.

A live worldwide prayer meeting has recently begun at Times Square Church (www.pray.org). At present, people from 92 countries have come online to pray with each other. We meet every Tuesday from 7–8:30pm EST. The prayer requests have been the most honest I have ever seen. People want to be free from the power of sin. They do not care who knows about their struggles; there is a sudden urgency to get right with God. This is a true sign of awakening!

Come and pray with us.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

SITTING WHERE TRUE LOVE IS by Carter Conlon

"Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Corinthians 12:14–15).

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These are the words of Paul, a man whose heart and life were an embodiment of Jesus Christ. Paul's life was given for the people of God, as is the case with every true servant of God. He was willing to travel through storm, flood, and fire; to endure personal longing and want; to be pressed above measure to the point where he even despaired of living—all in order that he might come to the people of God with a message of His love. However, Paul found that the more love he would express, the more

certain people would begin to pull away. Why would that be the case?

I believe we find the answer in the next chapter: *"This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare"* (2 Corinthians 13:1–2).

Remember, the Corinthian church was coming out of what could be considered an immoral abyss. In the middle of their city stood a major temple with more than a thousand prostitutes—prostitution was actually considered an act of worship in that society. Clearly, wrong had become right, and right had become wrong.

Paul was an apostle and pastor, so he was aware of the deadliness of sin. He understood the peril of those who fall into the trap of continually justifying wrong. That is the dilemma of the human condition—the longer we do something the Word of God defines as sin, the more our fallen nature rises to the fore and begins to determine what is wrong and what is right. Paul knew that if the people continued to willfully do wrong, making peace with those things from which Christ died to set them free, the victory of the cross could not be rightfully claimed as their own.

After all, those who did so would be left with only an illusion; in other words, they would have knowledge with no power behind it. And so, as a true spiritual father to the Corinthian church, Paul was attempting to bring them into a right way of thinking and living. That is why he said, “I will not spare.” Sadly, that is the point where many chose to draw back.

■ LOVE WILL CHALLENGE YOU

Paul was willing to be rejected in order that the people might ultimately find acceptance with God. In the same way, if I truly love you, I will challenge your lifestyle. I will challenge your conversation, your behavior, your concept of God, the direction you are headed. The pastor who does not love you will not challenge you.

Can you imagine people standing at the throne of God one day, only to find out they have been outside of the kingdom the whole time?

God once said to the prophet Ezekiel, “Son of Man, I have set you as a watchman over the house of Israel. If you see a wicked man walking in his wickedness and do not warn him, I will require his blood at your hands. However, if you warn him and he does not turn from his sin, his blood will be on his own head” (see Ezekiel 3:17–19). Therefore I am aware that I bear a tremendous responsibility as a pastor. One day I will stand at the throne of God, and I do believe I will have to give an account for everyone who considers themselves to be part of Times Square Church.

What would happen if I didn’t challenge the way you were living—if I didn’t bother to set before you the victory of the cross, didn’t talk about the reason God had to crucify His own Son, didn’t unlock the full context of the Word of God? Yes, it is important to talk about heaven and about the love of God, but I must not neglect to talk about another place where people who do not move toward truth will end up forever—a place void of all comfort, all hope, all life. The absence of God is so terrifying that our natural minds cannot even begin to comprehend it. In this world, God is omnipresent, meaning that He is everywhere. When you were living like a reprobate, He was following you down the street, whispering to your heart, wooing you into His house. Every sinner knows the presence of God in some measure, but nobody can explain what it would be like, having been created in the image of God and having had some exposure to His presence, to finally and forever be in a place where God is not. It would be an anguish that is deeper than I can even begin to portray to you. And if I truly love you, I will never let you go there without a fight.

Can you imagine people standing at the throne of God one day, only to find out they have been outside of the kingdom the whole time? They will look at their pastors who have to give an account for them and say, “You told me you loved me! You told me God loved me, yet you knew about this. You knew what happens to liars and to the immoral; you knew that those who refuse to turn from sin do not enter the kingdom of God! For what justifiable reason could you ever have held your peace and not warned me?”

Jesus once explained, *“But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf*

catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep” (John 10:12–13). Many of the hirelings that are pastoring in this generation in America can see what is coming—in other words, they know what the Scriptures say. Nevertheless, they have chosen to flee from it, refusing to preach any message that will expose the dangers of sin for fear that it might cost them their popularity. The bottom line is that the hireling is more concerned about the accolades of the people and the largeness of the crowds than the eternal fate of those people.

There are many people who gladly come to receive the love of God yet make no effort to turn from their old lifestyle. They want to live in sin and somehow have heaven at the end of it.

■ DO NOT BE DECEIVED

Bearing all of this in mind, consider the words of Paul to the Corinthian church: *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived”* (1 Corinthians 6:9). In other words, do not fall into the trap of assuming that all is well when, in fact, it isn’t. There are many people who gladly come to receive the love of God yet make no effort to turn from their old lifestyle. They want to live in sin and somehow have heaven at the end of it.

I am aware of a huge problem that exists today, even among believers,

in this city. Young people come to New York City in pursuit of a career, attracted by the excitement of city life—and, at the time, are generally uninterested in the commitment of marriage. However, they do not want to live without sex either. And so a huge deception enters their hearts as they conclude, “Well, God understands my needs. And if the pastor is not willing to tell me God loves me in spite of the fact that I hardly know the person I woke up next to this morning, that’s fine. I will go to another church that tells me I am loved of God and continue my practice.” Do not be deceived!

Please understand that I am not talking about people who struggle and genuinely desire to walk away from their sin. Rather, I am referring to those who are comfortable doing what they clearly know to be wrong. They have made peace with their sin, allowing twisted spiritual thinking to convince them that somehow they will be excused and not held accountable.

Paul plainly stated, “*Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators* (people who engage in sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage—period), *nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10, NKJV). Do not be deceived! You cannot have the kingdom of God and carry on these practices. It is assumed that when we come to Christ, we come acknowledging that we have sinned and have a genuine desire to turn from it. That is the great danger of having presented to this generation a Jesus who is here simply to meet all of our needs and make us feel wonderful about ourselves. No! Jesus went to a cross to deal with sin because it separates us from God.

Paul continued, “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*” (1 Corinthians 6:11). In other words, some of you were these things described in the previous verses, but then you came to Christ, and you came honestly. You believed the Word of God and allowed Him to wash away your sins. You accepted the fact that in Christ, you are as clean as if you had never sinned. You let the Holy Spirit come upon you, and now you are trusting the Lord for the new life that is promised you. Leaving the old behind, you are moving to the new. You are walking away from the trappings, the lusts, the fallen condition of a fallen world. Yes, we do fall, and we do make mistakes at times. But there is grace to cover our frailties, for God knows those who belong to Him.

It is an hour of the miraculous again, and God has invited each of us to be a part of it.

■ EXAMINE YOURSELVES

Paul would have been aware of the history of Israel under Joshua—when a new generation was about to go in to possess the promises of God after the previous generation was shut out in unbelief (see Joshua 5). However, this new generation could not enter the Promised Land until the reproach of the society that had held them captive was rolled away—until they were clearly separated and identified as the people of God.

Similarly, the American church has long been captivated by the society around her. The theology of fallen society has become the

theology of many of God’s people. But now another generation is rising up—people who are tired of the wilderness, tired of the powerlessness, tired of the name of Jesus being trampled underfoot.

The Lord is calling His own and saying, “If you want to inherit the life that I died to give you, you must choose to turn away from sin. You must refuse to walk in what is common practice in a fallen society around you.” It is an hour of the miraculous again, and God has invited each of us to be a part of it. We are a type of Joshua’s generation, about to go into the Promised Land, but we cannot go in until the reproach of Egypt is rolled away—until we are clearly marked as the people of God.

That is why at the end of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Examine yourselves!

How do you do that? It is simple: Start by asking yourself some questions.

Am I living in victory? Do I have dominion over sin, or does sin have dominion over me? Do I try to present an argument to justify my sinful practices? Remember, Jesus gives His Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins, promising that sin will no longer have dominion over them. He declares that old things are literally cut to the root, and although they may appear to have life, in reality they are dead. In their place is new life—new power, new victory, new hope, and a new future. The question is, am I experiencing something of God in my life that is clearly supernatural, breaking me free from past addictions? Or am I merely accumulating knowledge

without the power that sets me free? Which is it? It is either going to be one or the other.

Is my life a testimony of Christ? Are people asking me the reason for the hope that is within me, especially as we appear to be facing a foreboding future?

If you are sitting where true love is, you will not feel condemned, even if there is something in your heart compelling you to let go of whatever needs to be forsaken.

Am I drawn forward by an inner knowledge that the Lord's plans for me are for good and not for evil, to bring me to an expected end—a place that my heart has always longed to go? Am I drawn by the love of God, or am I driven by a compulsion to minister? There is a huge difference!

And finally, am I sitting where true love is? If you are indeed sitting where true love is, you will not feel condemned, even if there is something in your heart compelling you to let go of whatever needs to be forsaken and move toward what God has for your life. It will not just be a one-time surrender; it will be for the rest of your life.

Perhaps today you are aware of certain things that you need to let go of; practices that you need the courage to stop doing; places you need the power to stop going. Remember, you cannot get the victory over these things in your own strength. Yet if you are determined to go God's way, He will give you the grace that you need. You are going to find life, and you are going to find it more abundantly. God is simply looking for those who are willing to say, "I do not want to be deceived. I do not want to end up fashioning another Jesus that allows me to live in defeat while I somehow assume I am serving God! I want to walk with God in honesty. I want to forsake all of my sin and lay hold of everything that God is offering me in Christ. And I am going to trust God for the power to do it!"

There will be no awakening in our lives, in the Church, or in our cities unless we take these things seriously. The Lord cannot walk with us in the measure He longs to if we are not willing to walk in truth. So let us take the time now to examine ourselves and see if we are in the faith. We must not play a dishonest game with God when He is calling us to live in victory and in the miraculous. He is calling us to go in and possess all of the promises He has, not only for our own lives but for this generation—and by His grace, we will!

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

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|---------|---------|----------------|--------|
| Sunday | 10:00AM | 3:00PM | 6:00PM |
| Tuesday | 7:00PM | Prayer Service | |
| Friday | 7:00PM | The Gate* | |

*Youth and Young Adult Service

tscnyc.org

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