

Dear Friend,

As events in alarming proportions continue to unfold around us, I am more convinced than ever that you and I must return to the fullness of the supernatural life in Jesus, which is ours for the asking. There is only one remedy for the downward spiral of our present society and that is Christ in us, the hope of glory (see Colossians 1:27).

People everywhere are beginning to realize what you and I must do. It begins with prayer—not casual prayer but prayer that sees the need and calls out for the freedom and power to make a difference. At Times Square Church we have begun a worldwide live prayer meeting every Tuesday at 7–8:30pm ET. Check our website or go to www.pray.org.

At present, nearly 10,000 prayer requests have been submitted by people from 99 countries. I hear a desperation in many of them, which has always been the hallmark of true spiritual awakening. Please join with us online and let's believe together for a wonderful gathering of souls to Christ in this final chapter of history.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

THE FINAL RECKONING OF A SILENT WITNESS

by Carter Conlon

It is a wonderful thing to know that Jesus loves us—to know that He went to a cross, laid down His life, and is willing to give us an awareness of our own acceptance with God. But the Scriptures also tell us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (see Proverbs 1:7). In spite of the fact that God is so loving and merciful, there will be a day of reckoning for everyone who has ever been called by the name of Christ. On that day, each of us will stand before the throne of God and answer for what we have done with the deposit of God in our lives. Jesus illustrated this by telling the following parable:

In spite of the fact that God is so loving and merciful, there will be a day of reckoning for everyone who has ever been called by the name of Christ.

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods, And unto one he gave five talents,

to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:14–23).

The Bible speaks here of "talents," but these talents were not special

abilities such as playing the guitar or singing a song. A talent was a coin—a form of currency—which signifies the deposit of Christ's life that is given to each of His children. You see, each of us has a calling on our life, and in order to fulfill that calling, the Holy Spirit places us in the Body of Christ as He sees fit (see 1 Corinthians 12:18). The moment you received Christ into your heart, the deposit of God's life was put within you, and He said, "I have called you to do something that will bring glory to My name. I will walk with you, and I will give you strength. All you have to do is believe that what I have called you to do will be accomplished through My life within you."

Our refusal to speak at such a time as this is an absolute denial of the cross and the power of God.

Although many people assume that the five-talent people are the ones who stand in pulpits, that is not necessarily the case. I may only require two talents from God to do what I do. On the other hand, the single mother who has to drag four reluctant kids to church every Sunday may need five talents to do what she does. Perhaps you need five talents to go into your workplace every day or to be a testimony of Christ to your family. Whatever it is that we are called to do, the commitment of Christ to us is complete! He already paid the full price in His blood, and now we are asked to follow Him by faith and be witnesses of all that He is willing to do for anyone who will turn to Him.

■ THE WICKED SERVANT

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:24–30).

I used to think that it was rather harsh to take away the one talent from this third servant—until I understood the actual affront that his testimony was in the face of his master. When he says, "I knew that you were a hard man," the word "hard" in the original text means "a harsh, unfeeling man." It implies an accusation that God somehow possesses a harsh and inhuman character.

"Reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed" (Matthew 25:24). In other words, "I knew you were an unfeeling man, sending me out to do a work into which you yourself have invested no effort and have suffered no personal cost." This statement is actually a slap in the face of Christ, spitting on the image of God who sent His Son to a cross to die for all of us.

It is a display of spiritual ignorance of all that occurred on the day of Pentecost—how God's Holy Spirit came upon a people for the sole purpose of making them witnesses throughout all the earth until the end comes.

"I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth..." (Matthew 25:25). In other words, "I lacked the conviction and the moral courage to believe that you had sufficiently supplied me with all that I needed in order to accomplish what you called me to do. Instead, I felt that you were calling me to do something that was impossible, and so I was afraid."

Not everybody is called to speak to multitudes, but isn't there something you can do?

The Scripture tells us that he who is not perfected in love is filled with fear (see 1 John 4:18). Yet, once the love of God is in our hearts and we know that we are fully accepted by Him—once we have allowed the Holy Spirit to make us partakers of that which caused God to send His Son to a cross—then we are compelled to speak. When God received me as His own and His Holy Spirit came into my heart, nobody had to tell me to share Christ. In my heart I understood God's incredible love for humanity, and I also saw the great peril of people who did not know God. How could I be silent at such a time? I would be as guilty as a man walking down the street, seeing his neighbor's house on fire, yet continuing to walk by without saying a word. Even if his neighbor's entire family were

to perish in the fire, he would justify himself by saying, “Well, it’s not my concern. I don’t have any equipment. I can’t break down a door. I can’t do anything.”

That is what the wicked servant said: “I was afraid.” Likewise, there are those today who will have to one day admit, “I was afraid of the rejection of men. I was afraid I would be mocked; I was afraid of my own frailties—and so I stayed silent.” In reality, our refusal to speak at such a time as this is an absolute denial of the cross and the power of God. When we see this generation perishing before our very eyes—our families being destroyed; the social, moral, and political confusion all around us; the casting off of everything godly—God forbid that we should hold our peace! God forbid that we should be silent because we are afraid!

■ THE MASTER’S REPLY

“...Lo, there thou hast that is thine” (Matthew 25:25). In the end, the servant said to his master, “Here is your life back to you with no profit at all for your kingdom.” Sadly, the silent witness will utter the same thing when he arrives at the throne of God. Yes, he was in church, sang all the songs, did Bible studies—yet he never shared anything about Christ with anybody. He never spoke, possessed no burden, and in fact showed very little evidence of the true life of Christ within him. And so he stands one day at the throne of God and says, “Here am I, Lord...Your beloved and Your prize!”

When you study the master’s reply to the wicked servant in other texts, the implication is: “You thought I was this kind of man, did you? You thought I was a man who demands a harvest but puts no effort into it; one who sends people out to do a work

but does not give them a deposit of strength to do it? You should have at least given the deposit I put within you to those who were doing something!”

In other words, “You should have at least encouraged those who were actually investing in my kingdom. That way the deposit I gave to you would come back to me with interest. You could have supported somebody—perhaps a missionary or anybody doing something for the kingdom of God!” He continues, essentially telling the man with one talent, “You may not have had the courage yourself, but you could have at least done this, and I would have accepted it.”

Years ago, before I entered the ministry, I experienced great opposition on the job for speaking the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, I was actually threatened by people that I worked with. Nevertheless, I could not help but share Christ. One day my boss reprimanded me, “This is not an evangelistic association! You are a police officer, not a preacher. [Apparently he was wrong about that.] If I ever get wind of you doing this again, you are going to be in huge trouble, my friend!” Needless to say, things were very difficult.

Couldn’t you give a cup of cold water to somebody who is serving God and standing up for the truth?

Years later, I met a man who was part of the police department where I worked. When he saw me, he said, “Praise the Lord!”

“Oh, wow, when did you get saved?” I asked. I had known him for a long time.

He casually replied, “Oh, I have always been a Christian. I was raised to believe in salvation by faith through Jesus Christ.”

Stir up the gift of God. When God put His hand on you, He put a deposit of His life within you

I was stunned. I thought to myself, “Then why didn’t you at least encourage me? You knew I was facing incredible opposition because I was an open testimony for Christ. If you were going to live in the closet as a Christian, the least you could have done was to invite me into your closet and encourage me!”

That is what the master meant when he said, “You could have at least put out your money to those who were using it, and it would have come back.” I realize that not everybody is called to speak to multitudes, but isn’t there something you can do? Isn’t there some kindness that can come out of your mouth? Couldn’t you give a cup of cold water to somebody who is serving God and standing up for the truth?

■ STIR UP THE GIFT

Paul once said to Timothy, “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6). In light of this parable, my word to you today is the same: Stir up the gift of God. When God put His hand on you, He put a deposit of His life within you—the ability to do the supernatural!

So how do you stir up the gift of God? It starts by saying, “Lord, I want it! I want my life to be what You have called it to be. I do not want to simply blend in with this society and ultimately make no difference. I want the power to stand out as a follower of Jesus Christ.”

That has been my prayer over the course of my entire Christian life: “Lord, stir me. Take me to another place; don’t let me become stagnant. Don’t let me live on yesterday’s grace and yesterday’s victory. Today is a new day; there are new people I am going to encounter. Stir the compassion in my heart. Give me the eyes to see people the way You see them. Don’t let me be afraid of people’s faces. You are alive inside me, You gave me Your Holy Spirit, and You left me on the earth for a purpose—so help me to lay hold of the reason for which I am alive in this generation!”

Do not be afraid of the testimony of Christ. Do not be afraid of the suffering that will come—be a partaker of these afflictions of the gospel.

Paul continued, “*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7). God has given us the power to accomplish His divine purpose for our life. He has given us a sound mind to

know that it is not right that we be silent at such a time as this. He has given us love so that we are not motivated by a program, compulsion, or fear. Rather, we are constrained by His love that He has put within us—literally pushed from the inside out to tell people that God loves them.

“*Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner*” (2 Timothy 1:8). Just as Paul exhorted Timothy, the Lord is reminding us today: Do not be afraid of the testimony of Christ. Do not be afraid of the suffering that will come—the rejection, the ridicule, the laughter. A society that is dying in its sin will tell you that you have lost your mind, but do not be ashamed. Rather, be a partaker of these afflictions of the gospel.

Remember, the only thing that stops the true child of God is unbelief. And so we must ask God for the grace to honor Him and make full use of the deposit He has given to us. That is how souls will be touched—as they see the reality of Jesus Christ living within us!

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	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

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This newsletter is an edited version of “THE FINAL RECKONING OF A SILENT WITNESS,” a sermon given on February 2, 2014 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.