

Dear Friend,

As much as I am able I would like to encourage you to join us online for the Worldwide Prayer Meeting, every Tuesday from 7–8:30PM ET. As of this writing, people from 103 countries have joined us by texting their prayer requests or submitting them on our prayer website wwpray.org.

I am overwhelmed at the honesty and transparency of many of those seeking the help of God. If ever there was a time to pray...it truly is now. What an incredible opportunity for people who are turning to Jesus Christ for their answers to pray in real time with so many throughout the world, all sharing the same heart.

The prayer meeting in itself is a sign to all of us of what the Lord is both able and willing to do. I say, let the statisticians and prognosticators cry their woes of doom for our present generation. I believe that Jesus is as powerful today as He has ever been! One thing for sure, those who don't pray get what they always have...nothing! Those who do still get miracles!

Our God is a God of the miraculous. Go to the website now and read the answers for yourself.

See you Tuesday.

Yours always,

Pastor Carter Conlon

AND I SOUGHT FOR A MAN by Carter Conlon

The Book of Ezekiel speaks of an hour of decline in Israel—a nation that had claimed to know and walk with God. Sadly, the reality was that they had fallen far from the standard God had set for them. It has been the pattern throughout history that when the sin of a people reaches a certain point, God releases His hand of protection, and the nation begins to consume itself by virtue of its own behavior. We see this illustrated in the following passage:

When a nation is beginning to stray from righteous living, the voice of a prophet is raised up to warn the people of what is to come.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof" (Ezekiel 22:23–25).

Typically when a nation is beginning to stray from righteous living, the voice of a prophet is

raised up to warn the people of what is to come—the succession of events that will inevitably unfold if they do not return to God. Yet in this case, the prophets in Israel had become compromised. They were "taking the precious things," or in other words, robbing the people of the treasure of God that should have been available for that generation. "Making her many widows" means that families were beginning to break apart; the strength of the nation was being lost. *"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them... And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken" (Ezekiel 22:26, 28).*

There was no longer a clear distinction between what was of God and what was not. Lusting for power, the prophets began to tell people whatever they wanted to hear, so long as they could retain their prominent positions. They were not concerned about whether what they spoke was truth or not, freely declaring to the people, "Thus saith the Lord God," when the Lord had not spoken.

"The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery,

and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully” (Ezekiel 22:29). Here we see the breakdown of a nation—its utter social, spiritual, and moral decline—which placed it on the brink of judgment.

Surely by now we must recognize the similar state that our own country is in today. We have cast off restraint; evil is now good, and good is rapidly becoming evil. We, too, have used oppression and exercised robbery. The very basic unit of the family is being destroyed right before our eyes. Anybody who has ever studied anthropology or sociology knows that once the family structure is lost, the society is bound to unravel.

■ MERCY STILL TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT

Clearly the Lord is just in judging the people who claim to know Him yet have allowed this kind of debauchery at every level in society to govern them. However, look at His response as we continue in the passage in Ezekiel:

The danger of it all is that if we do not truly know the heart of God, we can arrive at a point where we no longer believe that God desires to show mercy.

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their

heads, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 22:30–31). “I sought for a man!” God had actually scoured the nation, looking for even one person to stand in the gap—to stand between the nation and God’s removing His hand, which would ultimately allow society to follow the course of its own destruction.

It is amazing that God could not find anyone, especially when you consider, for example, the temple. The temple would have been filled with all kinds of people attending religious services and studying the Scriptures. There were certainly people in those days who, at least marginally, would have been trying to live upright, moral lives. Therefore I cannot help but wonder: Is it possible that God could not find anyone not because the people didn’t study or know the Scriptures, but because nobody believed any longer that He would be merciful?

You see, it is possible to get into a mind-set, particularly as the people of God, where we become so gripped by the sense of judgment that we forget that mercy triumphs over judgment. We look out in our streets or watch the news and conclude, “Surely God is going to judge this.” It becomes easy to agree with judgment when the evidence is mounting before our eyes. And the danger of it all is that if we do not truly know the heart of God, we can arrive at a point where we no longer believe that God desires to show mercy.

■ A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The good news, however, is that throughout history, there have been moments that I like to call “spiritual awakenings.” This is when somebody, or perhaps many people, suddenly become aware of God’s willingness to restore and to heal. They understand His willingness, in the midst of our poverty, to release His riches once again—His willingness to take

us, not in our strength, but in our weakness. After all, the Scriptures do not tell us to come to the throne of God when we are strong. Rather, we are to come when we are weak to find help in our time of need (see Hebrews 4:16).

It is almost like an auctioneer who, at unexpected moments, suddenly pulls back the curtain and makes available an incredible treasure. In our case, we are being offered the extraordinary treasure of God’s mercy and power. The moment of awakening occurs when people begin to hear the Lord speaking: “I know your land is desolate. I know your prophets are not speaking for Me. Instead, they are leading the people into powerlessness, having created a religious system around them to help prop up their error. I know the people have used oppression, exercised robbery, and vexed the poor and the needy. Nevertheless, I am still willing, one more time, to be merciful.”

Is it possible that in Ezekiel’s day, God simply could not find anybody who believed that He could use them for this purpose, despite all natural odds seemingly being against them? Perhaps there were people who actually did believe God was willing to be merciful, yet as they began to look at their own resources, they concluded, “Well, I suppose God could be merciful, but never through me.”

Imagine if that moment of mercy had come to Gideon and he, too, formed a wrong conclusion. After all, when God appeared to Gideon and called him a “mighty man of valor,” the nation was being swallowed by 135,000 Midianites who had come in to take everything that the Israelites were trying to harvest (see Judges 6:12). Initially, Gideon did essentially question the messenger of God, “Are you speaking to me? My father’s tribe is the least of the tribes of Israel. My father is the least

of his tribe, and I am the least in my father's house. And in case you didn't notice, my father has an altar to a heathen god in the backyard. Are you sure you have the right address?"

Yet God had sent His Word to Gideon, which is all we need in order to be a mighty man or woman of God. Eventually, as Gideon followed the Lord in a plan that made no sense to the natural mind, the Bible tells us that God granted him and his army of a mere three hundred men a great victory over the Midianites (see Judges 7:20–22).

It doesn't take a hundred people to change your neighborhood; it only takes one who believes that God is willing to show mercy.

What would have happened if that moment of mercy had somehow passed him by? What if God had sought for a man, but He could not find a Gideon—or a Moses, or an Esther? We don't know what would have happened to God's people who were enslaved in Egypt, or what would have been lost in the day when Esther had an opportunity to go in and petition the king for the future of her people.

And so, in our generation, the treasure is being unlocked one more time! It is as if the auctioneer is standing before the people, saying, "Here stands an invaluable treasure. It is only revealed from season to season. Who will give me a hundred dollars? Who will give me fifty?" Silence. "Who will give me twenty-five? Ten? Five? Who will give me a dollar for the treasure?"

Likewise, God is calling out to men and women whom He wants to use for His glory. In fact, when you and I get to the throne of God one day, we will finally understand the number of times throughout history that He was speaking and searching for somebody. Remember, it doesn't take a multitude of people to change a nation. It doesn't take a hundred people to change your neighborhood; it only takes one who believes that God is willing to show mercy. However, if nobody steps forward, once again the treasure is forfeited and hidden until some undisclosed future time. People who could have been spared are lost. It is such a tragedy when God looks for somebody in a season such as the one in which we live, yet He cannot find anyone who believes He could be merciful, or that they might be used for this purpose. Therefore, the hand of God is lifted, and as the Scripture says, the way of the people is recompensed upon their own heads.

■ STEP FORWARD IN FAITH

It is clear that if we desire to be used of God in this hour, we must be willing to step forward in faith, just as David did when he walked into the Israelite camp and heard the mockery of God (see 1 Samuel 17:23). Astounded that the name of God could be brought into such disrepute among His own people, he asked, "Why is nobody fighting this? Why is everybody just standing still as if we don't have God on our side?"

Although the Israelites became offended at him, David said, "Don't let any man's heart faint, I'll go fight this giant." One more time, somebody believed that God was willing to be merciful. David went forward into that valley with a sling and five stones, believing that God would take the little he had and multiply it for His glory. That is exactly what happened—David defeated Goliath

and brought the people of God back to faith again for that season.

Faith means we look away from the mirror.

This is the essence of faith, and this is what God is looking for in our generation! As the book of Hebrews describes, faith is "*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*" (Hebrews 11:1–3). In other words, faith believes that the spoken Word to my heart is all I need. If God created the universe out of nothing, I don't have to have something in order for God to use me. I just have to have a heart that embraces the Word of God!

Faith means we look away from the mirror. We turn away from what we believe about ourselves, despising every voice that has ever condemned us or said, "You can only go this far and no farther." The Bible tells us that David refused to listen when Saul warned him, "*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). That is because faith says, "When God speaks, I will go forward! I believe that He will give me the power to be everything He has called me to be. I will not stand here in unbelief when the God of this universe, the God who created me in His own image, is speaking to my heart. I am going to believe Him for the miraculous to happen through my life!"

If after all of our learning—after two thousand years of books and testimonies—we have merely arrived

at a place where we do not fully believe that Jesus is today who He was in the Bible, then we are to be pitied above all people. We will be left possessing knowledge without power.

The writer of Hebrews continues: *“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6). We will not please God by our church attendance, Bible study or even prayer. These things are important, but without faith, it is impossible to please God! At some point, all of these things must produce faith that is willing to adopt the plan of God, even if it does not make sense to the natural mind.

■ WHO WILL BID?

“I sought for a man,” the Lord said. “I sought for somebody who would believe that I wanted to be merciful. I sought for somebody who believed that I could still use them, doing the miraculous through their lives. I sought for somebody!”

That same call of God is resounding once again in this hour. The question is: Will we see the history of Ezekiel’s day repeat itself? Will we be a nation that simply goes down into judgment without a season of mercy? Or will somebody, somewhere be willing to stand up and bid for this treasure of Christ—His life, His mercy, His power?

Perhaps you desire it but wonder, How can I buy this treasure when I have hardly anything to give for it? If so, consider God’s incredible invitation, spoken through the prophet Isaiah: *“Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,*

and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1).

It is time for us to rise up in faith, leaving the familiar to obtain the impossible.

That is the cry of God. If you think you only have a dollar, then bid your dollar. If you only have fifty cents, stand up and bid your fifty cents for the treasure. God is not looking for our resources or our strength. He is looking for the heart that simply says, “Lord, here am I; take me! Take me with my five cents; take me with my loaf of bread. I have hardly anything to give, but if You are unveiling the treasure, if there is an opportunity for me to know Your power and mercy for the sake of others, then count me in!”

We must not allow the treasure of God to be hidden again; the curtain cannot close on this generation in a season of incredible mercy. How tragic it would be if the Lord were to say of New York City: “I searched for a man and found no one.” No! It is time for us to rise up in faith, leaving the familiar to obtain the impossible, trusting God for the ability to accomplish all He has called us to do. As we bring to the Lord what little we have, let’s believe that He will take it and change a generation!

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 “AND I SOUGHT FOR A MAN,” a sermon given on **March 9, 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.