

Dear Friend,

The heart of Times Square Church has always been to reach out to those in need. Most recently we launched Feed New York, an initiative to underwrite food assistance programs in 100 churches throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

Since 2006, ChildCry, a ministry of Times Square Church, has been feeding hungry children around the world and today provides over 4,000 meals daily in twenty-two countries. These ChildCry feeding programs are a vital part of our TSC Missions anchor projects and other ministries we work with across the world. For most of these children in countries such as Haiti, Philippines and Burundi, their ChildCry meal may be their only meal today!

God has supported ChildCry through you. Thank you for helping us continue to feed these hungry children.

God bless you!

Treg McCoy
TSC Missions Director

STAYING STRONG WHEN GOD IS SILENT

by Carter Conlon

Does it feel like it has been a long time since you heard from the Lord? Does He seem to be silent while the fulfillment of the promises He once spoke to you remain nowhere in sight? Perhaps you started out full of faith; you believed God when He told you, "I am going to bring your family home to Me. I am going to deliver you. I am going to use your life for My glory." When He first spoke those promises, they were the joy of your heart and the strength of your days. But now, in the midst of God's silence, you wonder what happened to His Word to you.

Rest assured that we all have seasons like that in our walk with the Lord. Even one of the psalmists said, "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven" (Psalm 89:35–37). He began by recounting words from the very mouth of God—an incredible promise given to King David regarding the establishment of his throne and the enduring reign that would result. However, the psalmist then lamented: "But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground" (Psalm 89:38–39). In that day, as he looked around at the state of his

nation, all he could see was Israel's demise. What happened to the promise God had given to David?

God, where are the promises that You once spoke to me? Why does it seem as if everything is crumbling beneath my feet?

"Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbors" (Psalm 89:40–41). In other words, "My sense of confidence and protection is gone. My hope for tomorrow is in shambles; I am nothing but a reproach." It would be like the one who feels today, "I am supposed to be a fragrance of Christ, a testimony of victory! Yet I can barely lift up my head in public. I go into the grocery store, and although I should be witnessing to the clerk, I can only bow my head in shame over how little victory I am experiencing in my own life. God, where are the promises that You once spoke to me? Why does it seem as if everything is crumbling beneath my feet? Am I unaware of some sin in my life that has caused You to withdraw Your hand from me?"

“Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame” (Psalm 89:42–45).

He is saying, “The things I previously had the victory over seem to be coming back with a fury against me. I used to laugh at my enemies, yet now my enemies are starting to laugh at me. I once felt strong in battle, but now my sword has gotten dull, and I can no longer wield it with strength.”

What God spoke continues to be fulfilled without His having to speak again.

“How long, Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself forever? Shall thy wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?...Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?” (Psalm 89:46–47, 49). “God, how long will You hide from me? Time is short. Where is the fulfillment of Your promises to me?”

The psalmist was dealing with a very real situation—right before his eyes, the nation that was supposed to be established as a praise of God in the earth was seemingly being overthrown by powers of evil. Of course, the psalmist had no idea that it was through the line of David that Jesus Christ would be born, and through Christ, the Church would be established. God’s promises were absolute truth!

The problem is that we humans have a tendency to see with only our natural eyes. Oftentimes, our situations are merely a perceived wrong. It isn’t true, but we perceive it to be so. It is in these particular seasons that we must learn to stay strong, even when we feel that God’s voice has become silent.

■ GOD HAS ALREADY SPOKEN

There are many reasons why God is silent, but I am going to touch on only four that He recently put on my heart. First of all, sometimes God may be silent simply because He has already spoken to you! If you think about it, how can you accuse God of being silent when He has left you sixty-six letters, thousands of verses? He has already spoken, and there is no need for Him to repeat Himself. Aren’t you glad that the book of Genesis doesn’t say, “God said, ‘Let there be light.’ (Pause.) I said, ‘Let there be light’”?

Now if you and I had been there on that first day when God said, “Let there be light,” we would have been dancing and rejoicing from 6 o’clock in the morning until 6 o’clock in the evening. But now suddenly, when it starts to get dark, we begin to panic. “Oh no, I knew it wouldn’t last! I knew the light was going to go away. Maybe we have done something wrong. Maybe we weren’t reading the Word enough.”

The light fades away, and we spend the next twelve hours in sorrow—until the light reappears, and we realize that when God said, “Let there be light,” He didn’t mean that there wouldn’t be night; that there wouldn’t be seasons when we cannot see. He didn’t mean that we would always be able to understand everything that is going on in the heavenly realm. However, the light always reappears, and we see that what God spoke

continues to be fulfilled without His having to speak again.

■ AN APPOINTED TIME

Another reason God may be silent is because there is an appointed time for His Word to be fulfilled. The Bible tells us that Joseph was given an incredible promise that he was going to reign one day. He was going to be a man through whom great provision would be unlocked. However, there was an appointed time for the fulfillment of the promise.

Now God did not tell Joseph the whole story in the beginning. He didn’t speak to him about the betrayal, the pit, Potiphar and prison that he would encounter along the way. Sometimes I am really thankful that God does not tell us about the whole journey right away, for I don’t know if we would be able to handle it.

The things God has spoken to you will come to pass, but on His timetable, not yours.

When God says, “I am going to use your life for My glory,” we often forget that a sword is not formed in a hammock, it is formed on an anvil. There is going to be heat, hammering, bending, reshaping. It is all necessary, and it is going to take time. Yet in the process, we cry out, “Lord, I thought You said You were going to use my life, but all I do is find myself going through the fire. Oh, Jesus, help me! The enemy is destroying me!” And the Lord says, “I told you I was going to use your life for My glory! But I am not going to use you until the appointed time—until you are ready.”

The prophet Habakkuk said, *“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry”* (Habakkuk 2:3). The things God has spoken to you will come to pass. If God said that He is going to bring your family home, then He is going to bring your family home, and that is the end of it! If God said He is going to use your life, then He is going to use your life—but on His timetable, not yours! Our part is to believe, and the rest is up to Him.

■ RESISTANCE ALONG THE WAY

There are other times when God may appear to be silent, even though He has actually already sent the answer. However, it meets a form of resistance before it reaches us.

The Bible tell us that as Daniel set himself to seek God, an angel came to him in response and said, *“Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day you set your heart to understand, and to chasten yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come for your words”* (Daniel 10:12). A messenger had already been dispatched back on that first day in order to answer the questions that were in Daniel’s heart. *“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me”* (Daniel 10:13). Sometimes the voice of God is hindered because there is a battle going on in the heavenlies that we cannot fully understand.

At other times, however, the hindrance is inside of ourselves because we have listened to other voices that resist the voice of God. In our society today, we have access to so many voices, and that can easily lead our thoughts astray, thereby making it difficult for us to hear God’s voice. We must be very careful about who and what we are listening

to. As Paul exhorted the Philippians: *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”* (Philippians 4:8).

In the midst of God’s silence, you must resist the temptation to try to make happen what God told you He is going to do in your life.

■ TO GET OUR ATTENTION

The fourth reason God may be silent is because He is using His silence to get our attention. There was a period in my life when I was going through a bout of sickness that lasted for several years. One day as I was walking down the street, I suddenly became so frustrated that I finally asked, “What are You trying to tell me, God?” It was at that point that I began to hear His voice again. The Lord reminded me of His faithfulness, speaking to me about what He was going to do and why He had allowed certain things in my life.

God often uses silence to get our attention because we are too busy, thinking too much, going forward a little too fast. Suddenly He draws back—as if He folds His arms and says, “I’ll just wait until you run out of gas and are finally exasperated.” By that time, instead of going into the prayer closet in order to tell God what He should be doing, we are ready to say, “Lord, speak to me. What is it that You are trying to tell me? Why have You allowed

this in my life? There must be a purpose for it.”

■ ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD

As we saw in our opening Scripture, David had been given a clear promise from the Lord that his life would produce a royalty that would be established forever. As we look at his journey, we see that David certainly started out strong. The Holy Spirit came upon him, causing him to defeat a lion and a bear, and eventually a Philistine giant. It seemed as if there was no end to what God was going to do through his life, until a moment of silence came. Suddenly God was not speaking the way He used to, and David began to lose confidence. He lost confidence in God’s former words to him, which led him to start walking in his own reasoning. He attempted to guide his life by his own wisdom and resolve his problems in his own strength (see 1 Samuel 27:1–3).

When David finally came to an end of himself, recognizing that following his own reasoning only brought him as well as others into incredible sorrow, he returned to the source of his strength (see 1 Samuel 30:1–3, 6). The Bible tells us that David encouraged himself in the Lord. He recalled how faithful God had always been to him, and in that moment of remembrance, he turned back to prayer. The voice of God became clear again, and the Lord eventually brought him into the victory that had always been his.

This serves as a reminder that in the midst of God’s silence, you must resist the temptation to try to make happen what God told you He is going to do in your life. Instead, encourage yourself in the Lord as David did. Remember how faithful God has been. Think about the words that He first spoke to you, the victories you experienced that never would have happened apart from the

Holy Spirit working inside of you. Sit down and say, “God, You have not been silent to me! You have already given me Your Word. I understand that there is an appointed time for it to be fulfilled. The answer is coming, and even though it may seem for a season that Your promises have been overpowered by circumstances, You are the God who cannot lie!”

Your future is the future He has prescribed for your life. You have not lost it because of a few mistakes along the way, for that is not the way God operates.

Stay strong when God seems to be silent, for the victory is still yours. It has not been taken away from you; you are not cut off from the life of God. Your future is the future He has prescribed for your life. You have not lost it because of a few mistakes along the way, for that is not the way God operates. Simply turn to Him as David did—with all of your heart.

After the season of silence—the difficulty, the darkness and confusion—David wrote these words as part of the dedication of the temple: *“Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication”* (Psalm 30:7–8). David was saying, “There was a season in my life where You hid Your face

from me. It seemed that You were no longer there. In the natural, all I saw was destruction around me, the foolishness of my own mistakes and the folly of my own efforts. It troubled me, but I cried to You.”

“Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever” (Psalm 30:11–12). In other words, “Even when I am foolish, You remain faithful. You have put a song of praise within me that is independent of my circumstances. I don’t care what my eyes see, for You have put faith into my heart that things will be exactly as You said they would be! So I am going to sing praise and give You thanks.”

In the same way, God has already put a song within your heart. Even though He is seemingly silent to you, refuse to be silent to Him. Rejoice in Him, knowing that He will surely fulfill every promise He has ever given to you. God has been faithful to you, and He always will be! 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	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

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This newsletter is an edited version of “STAYING STRONG WHEN GOD IS SILENT,” a sermon given on April 6, 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.