

Dear Friend,

Without doubt you now know that we are living in perilous times. The renewed threat of global pandemic, the increase of unusual weather and natural disasters, combined with the rise of violent and expanding jihadist Islam are the warning signs of fearful days to come.

Jesus told us that men's hearts will begin to fail them as they see these and other uncontrollable calamities begin to overpower this world. However, I believe that you and I have no reason to fear. We are promised a place of refuge, in Christ, that will give peace to our hearts. Yet that place is not hidden. It will be a visible place for all to see...literally "a city set upon a hill." Genuine believers will be ushered into the complete victory of the cross. We will be covered, comforted, caused to stand and shout with a great shout: "...Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!" (Matthew 25:6).

The finest days of the true church of Jesus Christ are just ahead. Let your heart be at rest.

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

## THE INNER GROANINGS OF JESUS by Carter Conlon

*"Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept"* (John 11:32–35).

This is one of the few scenes in the Bible where we see the groaning of Jesus. It must have been a very evident groaning—the physical manifestation of an inner troubling in the heart of the Son of God. Lazarus had been dead for four days, and Jesus longed to do something that those about Him could not bring themselves to agree with. Keep in mind that these were people who knew and loved Jesus, among them Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. Jesus had visited their home, sat at their table, and spoken clearly to them about the things of His kingdom. Yet when it came time to believe that He could do something outside the realm of human possibility, they just could not bring themselves to agree with Him.

Witnessing their weeping and unbelief, Jesus groaned in the Spirit. And when they brought Him to where Lazarus was, He began to weep. I believe Jesus was weeping not only because of all the unbelief surrounding

Him but because He saw every situation where this scene would play itself out in the future—every person, every family, every instance where His people simply would not believe that He is able to bring life out of death.

Before Jesus' encounter with Mary, Martha had gone out to meet Him, saying, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now, whatever You ask of God, He will give it to You" (see John 11:21–22). What a phenomenal statement of faith! It would be like you and me saying, "With God all things are possible" and genuinely attesting to believe the truth of that.

***God speaks,  
and we agree...  
but only to a  
certain point.***

Jesus responds to Martha's statement, saying, "*Thy brother shall rise again*" (John 11:23).

However, notice what happens: Martha immediately puts it off into the future. "*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day*" (John 11:24). She simply cannot believe for the present. She is a type of a believer who says, "I believe Jesus is coming again one day. I believe that the trumpet is going to sound,

the dead in Christ are going to rise, and we who are alive and remain will be gathered together with them to be with the Lord forever. I believe, as Isaiah said, that all tears are going to be wiped away from every eye. There will be no more sorrow, no more sighing. I believe! But it is not here today; it is coming in the future.”

After Martha relegates Jesus’ statement to the future, He says to her, *“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die”* (11:25–26).

Jesus was talking about two things: Those who have come to a place of hopelessness will be brought to life again, and those who continue to believe and walk with Christ will not suffer any kind of spiritual death but will live with God for all eternity. In other words, they will partake of a supernatural life that begins now and never ends.

Jesus ends with the question: “Do you believe this?”

Martha responds, *“Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world”* (11:27). She basically quotes Scripture back at Jesus, although it was not directly related to what He is speaking about. She just cannot bring herself to agree with what He is saying to her.

This is the dilemma of the ages! God speaks, and we agree...but only to a certain point. The moment He starts speaking about things that we have put in the grave—things that we long ago buried and gave up on—we have a tendency to do what Mary and Martha did. We weep at His feet, or we quote Scripture that has nothing to do with what He is trying to tell us. It is as if we are attempting to somehow

convince God as well as ourselves that our faith is intact.

***We do not truly believe that He can bring back to life what we have considered dead.***

#### ■ THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN

The book of Second Kings tells the story of a woman who had a similar response when an incredible promise was spoken to her. This woman lived in Shunem, and she and her husband made a room in their house for the prophet Elisha to stay in whenever he was in the vicinity. One day Elisha said to his servant, “Go ask the Shunammite woman what we can do for her. Can we speak to the king on her behalf?”

Her response to their offer was, *“...I dwell among mine own people”* (2 Kings 4:13). She was basically saying, “It is what it is. I have made the best of a bad situation; I have found comfort where I could.” But deep down in her heart she carried the knowledge that she was childless, and she was likely already past the age of childbearing.

So Elisha called her to come to him, and he told her, *“About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son”* (2 Kings 4:16).

As the Shunammite woman stood there in the doorway, she could not get herself to say, “Praise God, this is true. I believe it!” Although she knew this man was a prophet of God, all she could say was, *“Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid”* (2 Kings 4:16). In other words, “Don’t tell me things that cannot be; don’t get my hopes up again. I have buried that hope already and have found solace among my people. I have found comfort in

my job; comfort in the little family that I have; even comfort in having you in my house. So don’t lie to me! Don’t start telling me that things which are impossible have now become possible. Don’t put a false hope in my heart!” That was all she could utter.

Like Martha and the Shunammite woman, we welcome Jesus into our home and into our heart. We love having Him at our table, opening His Word to us. We don’t have a problem with any of that, until He begins to speak to us about those things that we have put away as forever out of our reach. Perhaps even as you read this, certain things are beginning to come to mind—things that you have buried. You have given up on them; they are dead and gone. Like Lazarus, they have been in the grave so long that they stink.

***We fill our lives with the clang and clutter of religious busyness, until the temple of our body becomes a noisy commercial place filled with the natural and devoid of the supernatural.***

All the while, we have no problem quoting Scriptures at the Son of God. However, we do not truly believe that He can bring back to life what we have considered dead. We do not actually believe that all things are possible to Him—that Christ is a very present help in our time of trouble; that He can bring life into our barrenness. Even though we read

in the Scriptures time and again how He chooses the weak, the nobodies and the nothings, we simply cannot bring ourselves to believe it.

## *If God begins to speak, will you believe Him?*

### ■ HE IS STILL GROANING

The apostle Paul says, *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God”* (Romans 8:26–27). In other words, there are certain things that we should be praying for, but we dare not. However, the Holy Spirit intercedes within us with groanings that cannot be uttered. It is not that God cannot utter them, we just have a hard time speaking them.

When Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”* (John 11:25), He was talking about raising somebody from the dead—in other words, giving life where life cannot be found by any kind of human effort. The Lord is longing to raise us from all the sin and death that once held us captive, for our lives were meant to be a compelling testimony, evidence of the reality of God. But if we cannot bring ourselves to agree with the groanings of the Spirit within us—the groaning of God that we would believe and embrace His plan to give us a supernatural life—then we will do exactly as Martha did. We will fill our lives with the clang and clutter of religious busyness, talking until the temple of our body becomes

a noisy commercial place filled with the natural and devoid of the supernatural.

I am not saying that serving in the church is wrong, for obviously it is a good thing. However, it cannot take the place of the living Word of God. I can imagine Martha banging around in the kitchen, probably with the text of the Old Testament open before her so that she can memorize Scriptures at the same time, yet she doesn't even believe them! All she can do is come out and accuse Mary of being lazy for sitting at the feet of Jesus (see Luke 10:38–40). What a powerless, passionless, pitiful existence results when all we do is accumulate knowledge with no power!

Paul described this as the dilemma of those who profess to know God in the last days—ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; having a form of godliness but denying its power (see 2 Timothy 3:5). They are unable to say, “Lord, this is impossible. Nevertheless, if You said it, it is going to happen.”

Therefore, you and I would be wise to stop and consider: If God begins to speak, will I believe Him? Do I really think that God can do what He said He can do in my life? Do I believe that God can take my bankruptcy and my barrenness and do something that will bring glory to His Name?

When I was a young Christian, I remember looking out the window from a hotel lobby one evening and seeing an airplane flying overhead. I didn't like to travel; in fact, I had a fear of flying back in those days. But the Lord spoke to my heart at that moment: “You are going to spend much of your life flying to various places throughout the world, telling other people what I have done for you.”

At that point I could have quoted Scripture and said, as I watched the

airplane passing by, “Yeah, I believe that You are the Son of God, and one day You are going to come back and rule and reign forever.” Or I could have said, as I did that day, “Lord, I believe You. But You are going to have to make it happen, because I sure know that I can't do this!”

I believe in my heart there are great evangelists among those of you reading this, but you just don't know it yet. The whispers of God are coming into your heart, but you are pushing them away with Scripture and religious busyness because you really don't believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Oh, if only Martha had said, “I believe You,” she would have been the one who shouted, “Roll the stone away! Jesus is about to speak and bring my brother back to life!”

*We have allowed our own busyness and fears to rob us. When we don't pray, when we don't believe that God is speaking to our heart, we end up robbing ourselves of what God longs to do.*

### ■ LET JESUS CLEANSE THE TEMPLE

So how do we get to the place where we truly believe the things that God is speaking to us? Sometimes it starts by inviting the Lord to come and do what He did when He went into the temple at Jerusalem. *“Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers,*

*and the seats of them that sold doves” (Matthew 21:12).*

Invite Jesus to cleanse your temple! Say, “Lord, overturn all the clang and clutter—all the activities that are taking me out of the prayer closet, all the pretenses of holiness that are not grounded in truth, everything that is stealing my faith and blinding me to the reality of who You are. Make a scourge of cords again, and overturn this thing!”

***Vision comes again when the clutter and everything else that you have substituted for the power of God is removed.***

*“And [He] said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them” (Matthew 21:13–14).*

In other words, we have allowed our own busyness and fears to rob us. When we don’t pray, when we don’t believe that God is speaking to our heart, we end up robbing ourselves of what God longs to do. In fact, we rob not only ourselves but everyone who would have come to know Him because of us.

Perhaps the voice of God has been coming to you with a promise, but you keep pushing it away with church attendance, Bible study, and ministry. However, there is really no power in the Christian life until we come to the point where we say, “God

Almighty, if You speak to me, I will believe You. I am not going to bury Your voice under activity. I am not going to call possibility impossible with You. I am going to trust You to guide my steps day after day to where You want me to go. Thank You for interceding for me, Holy Spirit. Bring me now in line with the will of God. Not my will but Yours be done!”

The good news is that the Scripture says the moment the temple was cleansed, the blind and the lame came. Vision comes again when the clutter and everything else that you have substituted for the power of God is removed. Suddenly you will be able to see; suddenly where you have been lame, weak, weary, and tempted to give up, you will find renewed strength. You will begin to stand again—not in your power but in the power of God within you. There will be supernatural wonders and works in your life, and you will not go out on the street merely quoting Scriptures at somebody—you will be testifying of the incredible things God has personally done for you!

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 “THE INNER GROANINGS OF JESUS,” a sermon given on **June 29, 2014** 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.