

Dear Friend,

"Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools"
(Romans 1:21–22).

We are living at a time when this Scripture is being fulfilled right before our eyes. As a nation, we are confused about when life begins, when it ends, and how it should be lived in between! As the Church of Jesus Christ, it is so important that we embrace God's truth which promises to be our anchor in the coming storm. Not only will it keep us safe, but it will enable us to help many others find safety when it will be needed the most.

We must also encourage others in the Body of Christ whose faith will be shaken by the hardships just on the horizon. Please be kind and help them find the anchor of truth for themselves.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Blessings,

Pastor Carter Conlon

RIGHT JESUS—WRONG TIME

by Carter Conlon

Jesus said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

You and I would be wise to consider these words that Jesus once spoke to His disciples, bearing in mind that in this life, we will have tribulation, trials, difficulties, opposition, sorrow, and sometimes even depression. We will be falsely accused, even slandered. Yet we can be of good cheer, for we have the promise of God that no matter how dark the days may become, we are all going to make it to the finish line. Remember, Jesus has already won the victory.

***We have the
promise of God
that no matter
how dark the days
become, we are all
going to make it
to the finish line.***

In last month's newsletter, I gave an illustration of a football team coming out of the locker room and having to run through a paper wall in order to enter the game. That paper wall symbolizes everything you and I must break

through—all the lies of the devil as to why we cannot go forward in God. The enemy succeeded in hindering the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt and were heading into the Promised Land. They stopped at the border, convinced that they could not go forward and claim what was lawfully theirs (see Numbers 13:32–33). They failed to understand that it was only a paper wall, and as a result, they ended up dying in the wilderness.

So now let's assume that we as a team have broken through the paper wall, and now we are all lined up on the field. It's the opening kickoff. Somebody from our team backs into the end zone, catches the ball, and starts running toward the opposing team's goal. However, all of a sudden he stops, spikes the ball on his own ten-yard line, and begins to do a victory dance.

For those of you not familiar with football, players do not spike the ball until they cross into the opposing team's end zone. It is meant to be a celebration of having won the victory of that moment. Therefore, imagine how incredible it would be to see a player spike the ball on his own ten-yard line and then start dancing, wondering why his team is staring at him with a puzzled look on their faces! The audience is not cheering, and the opposing team is still coming at him.

“I thought I had won,” he would say. “What’s the problem? When we were in the locker room before the game, we were told that we are more than conquerors! We were told that someone from our team is already in the end zone, and we have already won the victory! So why does everybody have a problem with me claiming the full victory on our own ten-yard line? I just don’t get it.” And so this confused player turns around and heads back to the locker room, filled with sorrow.

■ ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

This is essentially what happened with two disciples of Jesus in Luke 24. They, too, had been given incredible promises: “You are going to become partakers of a marvelous victory! Whatever you pray for, you shall receive. You are going to be kings and priests; you will rule and reign with Jesus at the right hand of God for all of eternity.”

Yet the Scriptures tell us that these two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles away from Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place of victory; however, they were now heading away from it—discouraged and disillusioned.

“And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they could not know Him. And He said to them, “What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You only a stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty

in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:14–21).

Although victory is assured, it does not exempt us from fighting the battle that is currently before us.

These disciples had walked with the right Jesus. They knew Him; they had heard His voice. Jesus had made no secret of the fact that He was headed to a cross and that His Church would be left in the world. Yet His disciples had somehow assumed that the victory He spoke of would be immediate—that they would rule and reign with Jesus, and Rome would be overthrown in a moment of time. It is as if in their hearts they started spiking the ball at their own ten-yard line. Therefore, when Jesus was taken captive, beaten beyond recognition, put on a cross and crucified, they came to the conclusion that this Jesus they were following could not really be the Messiah.

Of course you and I know they had the right Jesus—just the wrong time. They neglected to see that there were still ninety more yards between where they were and the fulfillment of that victory—the true celebration at the throne of God. In the meantime, the opposing team was still coming at them; they would still have to pray and fight.

This serves as a reminder for you and me that although victory is assured, it does not exempt us from fighting the battle that is currently before us. We must remember not to make the mistake of declaring the victory too

soon. The Apostle Paul had to speak a similar word to the Corinthian church: “*You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you*” (1 Corinthians 4:8). The Corinthians had fallen under the delusion: “Why suffer? The victory has already been won! We are already full, we are already rich. We will never get sick again. There will be no more trials and no more sorrow. Isn’t that what the Bible says?”

Yes, it is true. The Scriptures do tell us that one day there will be no more sorrow, no more trials, no more difficulties, no more tears and no more sighing. But it does not say that we won’t have to go through those things while we are still here on earth.

David had a song inside his heart that could not be silenced by his circumstances.

Yes, we are guaranteed that at the end of this life, we are going to sit with Jesus, ruling and reigning with Him. We are going to have a mansion in glory and will one day walk on streets of gold. We will stand before the throne of God, and we will hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in a few things, so I will make you ruler over many things. Enter now into the joy of the Lord!” (see Matthew 25:21). All that is going to come...but in the end zone. Between here and there is a ninety-yard journey that you and I have to make; battles that we still have to fight. We are not fighting for our own salvation, for we already have that in Christ. We are fighting now for the testimony and the honor of God in the

earth. We are fighting so that Christ may become known to those who are still living outside of His kingdom and His victory.

When people see the strength of God in you as you have to walk through the same difficulties they do, they will stand back in awe.

■ A SIGN TO OTHERS

It is encouraging to remember that one of the reasons we will have tribulation in this world is because it is often the only way people around us will ever know that God is real. You and I will have to walk through the same fire, the same flood, the same difficult days as everybody else. However, the difference is that we have an inner source of strength that will carry us through and give us a song.

That is why the psalmist David wrote, *“He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth”* (Psalm 40:2–3). This did not mean that David would not have other battles to fight. He still had to get in his chariot and contend for the ground that the enemy was trying to take from the people of God. However, David now had a song inside his heart that could not be silenced by his circumstances.

“Praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord” (Psalm 40:3). In other words, when people see the strength of God in you as you have to walk through the

same difficulties they do, they will stand back in awe, saying, “Surely there must be a God! We are both walking through the same waters, yet what is drowning me seems to be replenishing him. That person has an inner strength I don’t have!”

Paul said it this way: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation...”* (2 Corinthians 1:3–6). Paul was never one to hide the fact that there would be trials in the Christian life. Later in that passage, he even goes on to say, *“We do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life”* (2 Corinthians 1:8). Paul was explaining, “Yes, we are going to go through trials, but God is going to comfort us. And with the comfort that we receive, we are going to be able to comfort others who find themselves in sorrow and confusion.”

■ WALK WITH THEM

In the coming days, I believe that many Christians will need to experience the comfort of the Lord. Just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, some followers of Jesus in our generation will find themselves full of dismay. It will be those who have been sitting in places where preachers convinced them that coming to Jesus meant they would be exempt from all suffering and trials. “Life with Jesus will be amazing! You will have a wonderful job and ministry. Plus, if you give God a hundred dollars, He owes you a hundred thousand back!”

People who do not understand the truth of what the Christian walk is about become open game for the enemy.

And so they embrace the promises with excitement. However, one day they realize that the money doesn’t come back; suddenly jobs are lost. Chaos begins to break out in their city. As trials and difficulties come upon them and sorrow floods their hearts, they will be left wondering, “Did I get the short end of the stick? What happened to all the promises of who I was going to be and what I was going to have?”

It is as if they were all dancing, only to suddenly realize that the opposing team is still running at them! You see, when someone spikes the ball too soon in football, it is considered a fumble, which means it is open game for the enemy. People who do not understand the truth of what the Christian walk is about become open game for the enemy to come after them. The devil will cast doubt upon the faithfulness of God and His promises. He will tell them that the whole thing is a farce or convince them that they really don’t belong to the team.

As a result, great discouragement will overcome these people. Now remember, they are not enemies of the cross; they just sat under a gospel that fast-forwarded everything too quickly. They essentially skipped the whole of the Christian walk and went right to the end.

We see in the Scriptures that Jesus did not give up on those disciples who were on the road to Emmaus. He went over to walk with them

because He knew they really did love Him. He said, *“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*” (Luke 24:25–27). Jesus showed them that suffering is an unavoidable part of the Gospel.

We are going to defeat the powers of hell, and we are going to take a multitude of souls with us!

In the same way, we, too, must remember not to abandon these brothers and sisters in Christ. We must not point the finger at them, saying, “You believed that stupidity, so now God has abandoned you!” Rather, we must do as Jesus did—go after them and walk alongside them. When you find somebody who does not have a correct view of what this Christian walk is actually like, you can open the Scriptures and say, “Look, my friend, you had the right Jesus—just the wrong time. Let me show you that trials and difficulties are not eradicated because of the cross; it is simply that their potential to destroy us is destroyed. Yes, we are guaranteed a victory because Christ crossed that finish line into eternity. Nevertheless, we must not forget that there is still a walk to be walked and a battle to be fought on this earth!”

■ THE COMING DAYS

There is no doubt that the days ahead are going to be increasingly difficult, collectively as well as personally. As we look around at our nation, we already see the family breaking down at an alarming pace—trouble and trial arising on every border. And so it is time to bear in mind Jesus’ words from our opening Scripture: *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

Never forget, there is already a celebration going on in the end zone! Of course, it may take you and me a little while to get there, but until then, don’t be discouraged, and don’t let your teammates get discouraged. We are still on the winning team; all of us are still going to cross the finish line. We are going to defeat the powers of hell, and we are going to take a multitude of souls with us in the days ahead! And when we finally get to the end zone, we are all going to join that marvelous celebration. There will be singing and dancing, and we will all be full of unspeakable joy such as we have never known in our lifetime! Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon
©2015 Times Square Church

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.

Tel:
212-541-6300

Fax:
212-541-6415

Church Location:
237 West 51st Street
Between Broadway & 8th Avenue

Mailing Address:
1657 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10019

e-mail:
info@tscnyc.org

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

Live Webcast:

All our Sunday and Tuesday services can be watched live and replayed for seven days on our website.

tscnyc.org

This newsletter is an edited version of “RIGHT JESUS—WRONG TIME,” a sermon given on April 19, 2015 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 New King James Version.