

Dear Friend,

Though it seems to be getting more difficult by the day to believe that 2016 will be a happy new year, I believe we have been given plenty of reason to rejoice!

Think of the words of King David at a time when Saul was seeking to take his life: *"But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy"* (Psalm 59:16–17).

God had a plan for David's life, just as He has for yours. And, yes, though there were undeniably dark moments, that plan ultimately had to be fulfilled, for God Himself had spoken it. Remember that what God has spoken over your life cannot be taken away, no matter how fierce the opposition. You and I can rest in the incredible truth that ultimately our lives will be fulfilling and bring glory to the name of Jesus. Nothing of hell can stop this! Let us rise up and take our place among those who have chosen to glorify Christ, no matter the cost.

Yes, my dear friend, 2016 will be a happy new year indeed!

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

## SIX WORDS THAT WILL DETERMINE YOUR ETERNITY

by Carter Conlon

Did you know that six words will determine your eternity? These are six words that, as a believer in Christ, you should have as the very foundation of your heart and service to God. We find them in a parable that Jesus tells in the book of Matthew: *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them"* (Matthew 25:14). Here we see that this master delivered his goods to his servants, which is paralleled in the book of Ephesians where it speaks of Christ: *"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men"* (Ephesians 4:8). Jesus took captivity captive, meaning that the former restrictions on your life—the voices that have told you that you are not smart or talented enough, the negative words that have been spoken over you—are all gone! You are now a new creation in Christ, and you have a unique calling ahead of you.

Of course, this unique calling on each of our lives will inevitably lead us to places where we do not have the natural strength to go—in order that Christ might be glorified through it all. That is why He *"gave gifts to men."* In other words, we are each given exactly what we need in order to fulfill His purpose for our lives. This is illustrated as the parable continues: *"And to one he gave five talents, to*

*another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey"* (Matthew 25:15). The talents represent a deposit of Christ's life—His character, His strength, His power, whatever is needed to get us through our journey.

***You are now  
a new creation  
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ahead of you.***

Now many mistakenly assume that the five-talent people are all behind pulpits or leading worship. That simply is not true! The person who possesses five talents does not necessarily have a high profile ministry. It could be the single mother who has to work two jobs in order to feed her family. She has to drag her children to church on Sunday when they don't want to get out of bed. Nevertheless, she chooses to keep believing God, and so she needs five talents to do what she does.

Perhaps today you need two talents to stand in public, but you need five talents to stay in the home where God has placed you. One day you may need more grace than another

day. Whatever the case may be, the Lord promises to give you the exact measure of His life and power to do what He has called you to do. He will never lead you where His grace will not sustain you.

***When I stand at the throne of God, only one voice will matter—the One who determines what my eternity will be!***

■ **OUR ETERNAL REWARDS**

Jesus continued His parable, *“Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord’”* (Matthew 25:16–23).

Here we find the six words that will determine our eternity: “Well done,

good and faithful servant!” Please note that I am not referring to our eternal destination, for we know that we will be with Christ if we have received Him as our Lord and Savior, and committed our lives to Him. What we are considering now are our eternal rewards—rewards that are deeper than you and I can even begin to imagine.

I live with the constant awareness that one day I will stand at the throne of God—and I will stand there alone. It does not really matter if a million voices said, “Did you hear this man on the Internet? What a great anointing! Did you hear his testimony?” It does not matter if a million people think I am wonderful or if a million enemies think I am not. When I stand at the throne of God, only one voice will matter—the One who determines what my eternity will be!

■ **FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS**

Notice that in the parable, the master said, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things.”* In other words, “I did not ask you to do a lot of things. I did not require of you what was out of your reach or beyond the strength I was willing to give you. No, I gave you just a few things to do in your life, and you did them well.”

I had to learn this important lesson when I was a young pastor living in Canada. I was determined to win the whole world to Christ! I set out with a passion to do what I felt in my heart needed to be done for the kingdom of God—traveling the length and breadth of the country. I went to the Arctic; I spent time with the Inuit people; once I even preached until I burst blood vessels in my eyes. I fasted, I ran, I prayed—only to be completely depleted of strength at the age of thirty-seven.

I remember going out on a country road and accusing God of being unfaithful to me. I was very angry with Him and I said something like, “Lord, I have given You everything. I have given You my future, my family, my home. And You reward me by taking away my health?”

I was so angry that I really did not care what God was going to say back to me. And so you can imagine my astonishment when He simply responded, “I love you.” My heart melted at those words.

That is when the revelation came to me. God said to me clearly, “Carter, you have done a lot of things in My name. You have traveled, you have preached at many meetings, and good things have happened. But when you stand before Me one day, there will be no reward for any of it because I did not ask you to do that. You took it upon yourself to do those things, and that is why your strength is gone.” At that point, the only thing left for me to say was, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

***How preposterous it would be for any of us to accuse Christ of not being faithful when we consider the miracle of the fullness of our salvation!***

He said to me, “There are one hundred and fifty-eight names on the membership roll of the church I have given you to pastor. That is the only thing I have asked you to do right now. When you stand before Me one day, these names will be presented to you, and you will answer for them—all one hundred



and fifty-eight. Did you tell them about Me? Did you warn them about walking in rebellion to a holy God? Did you set before the ones who were struggling the hope that the cross offers?"

## *What a tragedy it is when people bury their testimony of Christ.*

I remember standing on that road and saying, "Lord, for the rest of my life, I will serve You where You plant me. I will not look beyond what You have given me to do." After that encounter with the Lord, I found myself fully given to that little church. A new joy came into my heart, and my physical strength began to return.

### ■ A BURIED TREASURE

Now let's take a look at what happened to the third servant in this final reckoning: "*Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed'*" (Matthew 25:24).

This was basically an accusation against the servant's lord. It would be like a man standing before God today, saying, "You are a hard master. You have set me in a difficult place and are asking something of me that I cannot give. You expect me to produce a harvest when I cannot see Your hand reaching out to help me in any way. Where are You? Where is Your strength? Where is the fulfillment of Your promises?"

How preposterous it would be for any of us to accuse Christ of not being faithful when we consider the cross and the miracle of the fullness of our salvation!

We could never dare to stand before God and say, "You put me in a hard place! You put me in a hard job and a hard neighborhood. You gave me a hard life and an impossible family situation, and You asked me to bear fruit there. But I don't see You anywhere!"

The third servant explained, "*I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours*" (Matthew 25:25). In other words, "I gave up on Your kingdom. I placed my hope in the things of this world. I buried this incredible call You gave to me and became so worldly that nobody could see You in my life! But I still believed that one day I could present myself to You, and somehow You would look at me and say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!'"

## *We must not assume that we are dealing with a Savior who puts us in a hard place and gives us nothing that would enable us to win the victory.*

What a tragedy it is when people bury their testimony of Christ. About a year ago, a man whom I had known from many years before met me backstage at church. He greeted me, and I said to him excitedly, "You're saved! That's amazing! When did you get saved?"

"Oh, I have always been a Christian," he replied.

The only thing I could think was, "Well, you sure could have fooled me!" I suffered persecution for many years because I was standing

for Christ, and not once did this man ever come to me and at least say, "I am standing with you; I am a brother in the Lord. I am believing God for you and with you." Instead, his talent was buried deep in the earth.

## *You do not have to be great in the eyes of men. Just do well where you are; win the victory where you are planted.*

### ■ A FULL SUPPLY

The Scriptures tell us that the master looked at this third servant and said, "*You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed*" (Matthew 25:26). In the original context of this verse, the master was saying to this servant, "Is that really what you thought I was like?" It was a question, not a statement. He was not agreeing with this man's assessment of him.

"*So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away*" (Matthew 25:27-29). In other words, "If you were not willing to walk in what I was offering you, why didn't you at least pass it on to somebody who would?" And so the talent was taken away. "Give the strength that I promised to the one who wants it—to the one who believed I would give a full supply of life to accomplish what I have asked of him!"

## *Remember, God has strategically placed you exactly where you are.*

You and I would be wise to ask God for the grace to not bury what He has given us. We must not assume that we are dealing with a Savior who puts us in a hard place and gives us nothing that would enable us to win the victory. The Lord is more than willing to supply us with every single thing we need. He will not allow us to be tested above what we are able to bear, but will make a way for us in the midst of every trial so that we are able to walk through it. And don't forget, you do not have to be great in the eyes of men. Just do well where you are; win the victory where you are planted. Stay in the marriage that you are in; raise the children that God gave you. Work diligently in the job you have, or search diligently for the one you don't have yet. Stand strong in your neighborhood; speak the truth when other people lie; speak kindly when vilification is on the lips of almost everyone around you. Walk morally clean; be given for others even when self-focus tends to be the dominating force of our day.

## *Trust Him daily for the grace to fulfill all His purpose for your life—up until the very moment you stand before His throne.*

Of course, we cannot do any of these things without the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, continue to ask God for the courage to live as a light in a darkened world; for the grace to move into what was formerly impossible for you. The Lord will be faithful to answer your prayers, for with His calling always comes His enablement. Remember, God has strategically placed you exactly where you are. You are in the family you need to be in; you are in your particular neighborhood and job for a reason. There is no happenstance with God! And so I encourage you to trust Him daily for the grace to fulfill all His purpose for your life—up until the very moment you stand before His throne and hear Him say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord!”* (Matthew 25:23)

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

**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 “SIX WORDS THAT WILL DETERMINE YOUR ETERNITY,” a sermon given on **September 20, 2015** 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 New King James Version.