

Dear Friend,

I am sitting in the waiting room at the hospital where my daughter just gave birth to her second son. I am in awe of Kate's willingness to endure such pain for the sake of giving life to another!

Although there are many signs of God's willingness to suffer that we might have life, I can't help but wonder if motherhood doesn't cry out the loudest to us all. My hat is off and the deepest regards of my heart go out to every mother reading this letter. You challenge my heart to fully embrace whatever hardship I may have to endure so that others might have the eternal life I have come to know.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

With you in all things,

Pastor Carter Conlon

AND HE PRAYED AGAIN by Carter Conlon

Jesus once told a parable to illustrate the point that *"men ought always to pray and not lose heart"* (Luke 18:1). In this parable, a widow continually came to an unjust judge for help, essentially saying, "Someone is opposing me. I need you to avenge me now!" We can infer from this illustration that this judge had the power to make a difference. Nevertheless, the answer did not seem to be coming. In fact, the more often the widow appeared before him, the worse the situation likely grew.

Finally things took a turn for this widow. *"And [the judge] would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me'"* (Luke 18:4–5).

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Jesus concluded the parable by saying, *"Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"* (Luke 18:6–7). In other words, God will fight for you if you call out to Him. He is not like this unjust judge; He is not going to draw back or refuse to

answer you, even though it may seem as if He keeps putting you off.

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I believe many people today are close to losing heart, if they have not done so already. They have prayed for a specific situation, perhaps a family member or even some aspect of their own character to change, but the answer still has not come. However, we must remember that answers do not always come in the way or at the time we think they should. We want God to answer according to our schedule. We want our children saved today; we want this issue in our character done with yesterday; we want that annoying person in our office to be gone by morning!

However, the Lord gave us this particular parable for a reason—to encourage us to keep praying and not to give up in the process. Jesus even added, "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily"

(Luke 18:8). In other words, the decision to answer us when we pray will be made quickly.

■ GOD'S ANSWER THROUGH MOSES

The Bible gives us many examples of when God answered the prayers of His people, yet they did not see the answer immediately with their natural eyes. Consider, for instance, when the children of Israel were living as slaves for a season in Egypt. *“Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them”* (Exodus 2:23–25).

God was avenging His people speedily. However, things seemed to be getting worse.

The people were essentially crying, “God, help us! Do You not see what is happening? We are Your people, but we are being oppressed, ridiculed, mocked, and controlled. Didn’t You say that we would be blessed and become a blessing to all those who are on the earth?” And so a collective cry arose because of the incredible oppression. The Scripture says, “God acknowledged them,” meaning that He accepted them as His own people and answered their cry.

“And the Lord said [to Moses]: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt’” (Exodus 3:7–10).

Right at the moment when the people of Israel cried out, God could have snapped His fingers and opened the country’s borders. He could have created an army out of nothing or sent angels to cause all of Egypt to die right on the spot. The Lord could have done it so many ways, but instead He chose a way that was probably not how the people would have wanted: He went out into the desert, found a man who was eighty years old, and called him.

The point is that God had answered their cry, but the people simply did not see it yet. All the while, the answer was in progress through a man named Moses. However, God first had to deal with Moses and get him through his own unbelief. After that, Moses had to go to his father-in-law and ask for permission to leave, and then he had to convince his brother, Aaron, to go with him. Finally, he had to gather his family and set out on foot to the land of Egypt.

Will there be anybody left who still believes that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

Eventually Moses showed up in the camp of Israel, and he told the people the story of how God appeared to him in a burning bush. He explained the plan for him and Aaron to stand before Pharaoh, demanding their freedom. *“So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped”* (Exodus 4:31). They believed!

Yet even after they believed, things grew worse. Pharaoh essentially said to Moses and Aaron, “You only want to go out into the wilderness to worship because you are lazy and do not have enough to do. Therefore, we will not give you straw to make your bricks anymore. You have to go out and gather your own straw, and do not let the tally of bricks diminish” (see Exodus 5:17–18).

So the children of Israel said to Moses and Aaron, *“Let the Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us”* (Exodus 5:21). Now all this had happened since the day they cried out to God. In reality, God was avenging His people speedily. However, things seemed to be getting worse, with hopelessness setting in more deeply than ever before. And right before the moment of the great deliverance, as the people’s faith was beginning to fail, even Moses came back to

God and started accusing Him, *“Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all”* (Exodus 5:22–23).

When it seemed as if everything was coming to an end, God finally had the people’s attention.

And so we can see why Jesus finished the parable of the widow and unjust judge by saying, *“I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:8). Will there be anybody left who still believes that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

There is a moment when people are weary of evil being paraded as good and good being cast down as evil.

■ ELIJAH: A MAN LIKE US

Let’s look at another example through the prophet Elijah. The Scripture describes Elijah as *“a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months”* (James 5:17). He was a man “with a nature like ours,” meaning that he was not a superhuman being. Rather, he was an ordinary man who

simply believed God and undertook the calling placed on his life with sincerity so that God would be honored and the people’s hearts would turn back to Him.

The book of First Kings shows us that Elijah prayed earnestly for a reason. In essence, he was crying out, “Lord, whatever it takes, turn the hearts of the people back to You!” So for three and a half years, all false comfort was taken away. You see, the people were satisfied as long as their cupboards were full; as long as everything looked good. So, what did God do in order to get the people back? In His mercy, He sent a drought and took it all away! He took their bread out of the cupboard; He took their crops out of the field. Suddenly, even the false prophets who had claimed that all these things would always abound were gone! When it seemed as if everything was coming to an end, God finally had the people’s attention.

There is always a moment when people’s hearts are open to truth again—just like the hour in which we are living. There is a moment when people are weary of evil being paraded as good and good being cast down as evil; when people are tired of the confusion that is being forced upon their children. There is a moment when people begin to wonder, “Where has statesmanship gone? Where are the leaders? What have we become?” It is as if suddenly, as a society, we have become exposed and must consider what we truly are.

It was in a time such as this that Elijah prayed again. He prayed after the drought—after the people knew that what they had been trusting in was of no lasting value. This time Elijah was praying for the blessing of God to come down upon the people, for he saw that

their hearts were beginning to turn toward the Lord again. We see in 1 Kings 18:42–43 that he bowed very low as seven times he prayed and seven times he sent out a servant, saying, “Go take a look at the horizon and tell me what you see.” Thank God that Elijah did not give up after the third time or the fourth time, or how different history would be!

Unfortunately, we have become such an instant society that many of us have lost an understanding of pressing in until the answer is made manifest.

“Then it came to pass the seventh time, that [the servant] said, ‘There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!’” (1 Kings 18:44). Because Elijah chose to press in and persevere, heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

■ WILL HE FIND FAITH?

Just as Elijah did, you and I must learn to persevere in prayer, particularly in this dark hour. Yet, unfortunately, we have become such an instant society that many of us have lost an understanding of that old-fashioned concept that was part of the church for two thousand years: pressing in until the answer is made manifest.

And so again we must consider the question that Jesus posed: *“When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:8). Will He find the kind of faith that believes Him for situations that seem

impossible in the natural? Will He find the kind of faith that believes it has the answer and does not give up until it is fully seen—the kind that says, “I will not let go of my sons and daughters. I will not let go of my grandchildren. I will not let go of my marriage, even though it looks hopeless!”

If we do not give up, one day we will see with our own eyes what we have believed in our hearts!

When the Son of Man comes, will He find somebody who still believes that there can be a revival in the United States? Will He find somebody who believes that the same God who brought a spiritual awakening to New York City in 1857, sweeping thousands into His kingdom, can do something even greater? Will He find those who say, “Lord, I believe, despite what my eyes see all around me. I believe because we are crying out to You—not just for ourselves, but for the testimony of Your name in this generation. We are crying out for children who are being told that You do not exist; we are crying out because perversion has multiplied itself in our streets and on our airways. But You went to a cross so that all might be forgiven, and You told us that whatever things we pray for, believing, we shall receive. Therefore, I am asking You for an outpouring of forgiveness in this nation—

in my city, my home, among my friends, and in my workplace! I know that You have answered me, and I am going to keep coming and pressing in until I see it with my own eyes!”

Oh, if ever there was a time to pray, it is now! We must press in and pray, and then we must pray again. And if we do not give up, one day we will see with our own eyes what we have believed in our hearts!

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

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

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This newsletter is an edited version of “AND HE PRAYED AGAIN,” a sermon given on June 19, 2016 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.