

Dear Friend,

There are times in history when God Himself determines to bring His own name back to a place where He is recognized and honored (see Ezekiel 36:22–38). You and I are a distinct part of this, as we are the ones He will restore and set high on a hill for all who live in darkness to see.

In that context, if you care about the honor of God and the souls of people, prepare to take the journey of a lifetime. This does not mean that you will not be surrounded by turmoil. Rather, in the midst of it all you will rediscover the power of Christ's victory and your purpose as a partaker of it while on this earth. You will be kept by the Spirit of God and empowered to see His hand at work in a profound way.

As the early saints did, you will be rescued from the power of fear and supernaturally emboldened to see and speak what those who live in darkness cannot. When people see your confidence in God, they will ask your reason for the hope that is in you, just as the people did on the day of Pentecost.

Close your eyes now and pray a simple prayer: "Jesus, take me to that place." I'll meet you on that hill...that place where the testimony of Christ will shine for the sake of those He loves and died to save. Remember, He died for them and lives for you!

Meet you there,

Pastor Carter Conlon

PRAY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

by Carter Conlon

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:10–11).

In this passage, the apostle Paul was writing to the Corinthian church, among whom contentions were rising regarding the church leaders—Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ. People had a preference for specific leaders over others, resulting in arguments and division.

"But what if I don't like the one who is in authority? How can I give thanks for that person?"

Likewise, we know that everyone has his own opinion today regarding our leaders—whether religious or otherwise—for God has given us the ability to think and discern. So how would it be even remotely possible for us to begin to "all speak the same thing" as Paul instructed?

There is only one way that can happen: You and I must ask God to give us the mind of Christ. We all need the mind of Christ in order to help us see above the struggles, trials, divisions, and contentions of this world and, instead, to start seeing things from heaven's perspective.

Elsewhere in the Scriptures, Paul had instructions for Timothy which are also critical for us in this hour: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1–4). In other words, Paul was saying, "I want you to pray; I want you to intercede. And I want you to give thanks for all men—for leaders and those who are in authority."

Perhaps you are thinking, "But what if I don't like the one who is in authority? How can I give thanks for that person?"

There is only one way I know: God said in His Word that all who are in authority are planted there by Him. That means that the Lord has given us the leaders He has

determined we need for this season in our country—even if the ones He has appointed are for the express purpose of getting us back into the secret place of prayer.

Notice that when the Bible says “*giving of thanks for all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life,*” (1 Timothy 2:1) it does not promise that everything is going to go well. Rather, it means that we can live at peace no matter what may be going on in society around us, having come to the point where we can confidently say, “God, thank You for giving us what we need at this moment in history. Thank You that You are still in control. And no matter what it will take to bring about an awakening in this country, I trust You!”

While the whole world lives in the realm of natural understanding, God calls His people to live differently.

■ THE EARLY CHURCH

We see throughout the Bible that the Lord always makes a way for His people to live in peace, despite external circumstances. Consider for a moment the beginnings of the early Church when the situation was anything but peaceful. Jesus had just been crucified, and there was a blood-thirsty crowd in the marketplace, dead set against the followers of Christ.

The Scriptures tell us that the disciples were assembled in an upper room, “*for fear of the Jews*” (John 20:19). In other

words, there was great fear in their hearts regarding all that was taking place around them. Yet, suddenly Jesus walked into the room, and the first word out of His mouth was, “Peace!”

This illustrates the point that while the whole world lives in the realm of natural understanding, merely responding according to what they can see with their eyes, God calls His people to live differently. That means that in the midst of the sewer of opinions today, with all the vilifying, yelling, blaming and hating that is going on, you and I are called to live in a higher place—a place where we understand that God is in total control of all things! When Jesus walked into that room, in effect, He was saying to His disciples, “It looks really bad, doesn’t it? But remember, it is not out of God’s control. As a matter of fact, everything is unfolding exactly as it is supposed to.” What appeared to be a disaster was actually the perfect will of God being played out for the salvation of humankind!

And so we are reminded that, as believers in Christ, we are not to live merely seeing things from a natural perspective. There must come a point when we trust God, believing that all things are working together for good. Remember, the whole purpose of the work of God on the earth is the saving of the lost—bringing people out of sin and darkness and into the kingdom of God—and you and I must be willing to endure whatever it takes for that to happen.

■ ANOTHER VANTAGE POINT

As we pray for the future of our nation, it is encouraging to look back at what the Lord did in the prophet Elijah’s day. I have no doubt that people were praying for their nation. After all, the Bible tells us

that there were seven thousand who had not bent their knee to the spirit of that age (see 1 Kings 19:18). I can imagine them crying out, “God, help us! God, bring Israel back to her purpose again. Be merciful to our children!”

How did God answer the cries of His people? He stopped the rain! There must have been many who looked at their circumstances from a natural perspective and said, “Lord, we are asking You to help us, not starve us to death!” Nevertheless, God did what was necessary in order to get the people to that mountain so that His power might be displayed again. As it says in Isaiah, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts*” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

What looked to be a disastrous plan in the natural was actually the plan of God that brought you and me to Christ!

We see this truth illustrated again in the fact that when Jesus came to the nation of Israel as a baby, and subsequently as Savior, it was a time when they were being occupied. The nation was in turmoil, and its religion was being vilified. Now, it would have been easy for God to change in an instant all that was oppressing His people, but He chose not to. And it is because of His choice that you and I are here today. The victory of the cross was won, and sin was atoned for. What looked to be a disastrous plan

in the natural was actually the plan of God that brought you and me to Christ!

Perhaps some of you feel that you have to force yourselves to give thanks for our president and vice president.

And so now you and I must have the maturity to operate as citizens of heaven. According to the Scriptures, we are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (see Ephesians 2:6), and that means we ought to have another mind. Despite what may appear to be confusion and disorder in this hour, we must understand that God is in control and everything is working together so that His purposes might be fulfilled. This does not mean that we do not use our minds. It does not mean that we bury our heads in the sand and refuse to be aware of the issues; nor does it mean that we do not have an opinion. It just means that we ultimately have a higher opinion than what all the circumstances around us may warrant. As followers of Christ, we are to look at this world from another vantage point. Our value system is based on the souls of men and the honor of God, and because of that, we are called to pray with fervency for our nation and our leaders.

I encourage you to think through some of these things before you pray. Paul said that we are to pray with supplications and intercessions, giving thanks for all men—for kings and all who are in authority. Perhaps some of you feel that you have to force yourselves to give thanks for

our president and vice president. Yet as hard as you may find it, you must allow the Holy Spirit to lift you higher than just an opinion or an argument—a limited view of what God is doing in this society. The world cannot do this because they do not have the Spirit of God. But we do, and therefore we are able to rise above the passions of our own hearts and say, “God, thank You that You have given us exactly what we need for Your purposes to come to pass!”

Remember, it does not mean that we agree with everything, but we do choose to agree with God. We may not fully understand it all right now, but one day we will know even as we are known (see 1 Corinthians 13:12).

It is going to take a revival to heal us, and that is what I am believing for.

■ A PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING

Although our nation is deeply divided today, there is still reason to remain hopeful. It is going to take a revival to heal us, and that is what I am believing for. I am believing that God’s house will be filled once again—that people of all cultures, backgrounds, races, characters, and even political affiliations will come together and start to pray. I am believing for something deeper than I can see with my natural eyes.

Whatever it takes to win the lost—whatever it takes for God’s name to be honored in this nation—is guiding my value system now. And that is where God gives a peace that passes understanding. It is deeper and

higher than what we know or can see; it is something that can come only from Him.

The people of God can remain at peace, for we are not relying on any secular leader to do what only God can do!

Yes, everything going on today may lend itself to unrest and anxiety. “What will we do? Where will we live? What will we eat? Where will we work?” Nevertheless, the people of God can remain at peace, for we are not relying on any secular leader to do what only God can do!

And so today I challenge you to find that place of peace in your heart. You are needed as an agent for change in this divided, bitter time. Remember that the Scripture says, “As much as is possible, live peaceably with all men” (see Romans 12:18). We can choose to be bitter and divided, or we can choose to live peaceably and trust God. Each of us has that decision to make daily. If you make the right choice, your words will have power. My prayer is that God will help all of us as His Church to be channels of truth and healing in this moment of time. When we open our mouths, may it be a river of life and not death that flows out, for the Bible says, “*Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so*” (James 3:10). There is incredible power in our speech—power in the words we choose to say as well as how we choose to

say them. I am finding lately that while I may intend to say something one way, the Holy Spirit brings it out in a completely different way. It is as if my words are simply being altered by the Holy Spirit as I speak so as not to wound, hurt or divide. That is what it is like to be governed by the Spirit of God.

May each of us have a character that is enviable. Sure, people may think we are foolish at first. But when we walk away, let them begin to ask in their hearts, just as the once blood-thirsty crowd did in the Book of Acts: “Where did they get that peace? What do I have to do to get it?” (see Acts 2:37).

May each of us take the time to truly pray with thanksgiving for our nation, believing that somehow healing is going to come—sovereignly, divinely, in a way we may not be able to see with our natural eyes but somehow know in our hearts. May we be confident that God is still on the throne, His purposes are being fulfilled, and He will receive all the glory!

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.

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