

Dear Friend,

In that first season we now know as Christmas, it must have seemed like the times could not get any worse. Occupied by a godless, dominant power, herded like cattle to be counted, and their religion no doubt ridiculed by the new world order of the day, who could blame the people of Israel for their growing feelings of dismay? Where was God in all of this? What was His plan to deliver His people and fulfill their destiny to be a blessing on the earth? Of course, today we know the plan. Something as small as a child was about to affect the future of the world.

Today, you might ask the same question: "Where are You, God, in all the godless chaos that threatens our time?" You might be surprised to find out that you are a significant part of His plan. The plan of God that once flowed to you now flows through you!

As you read this newsletter, utter a small prayer. "Lord, lead me to those whose hearts are ready to receive You. Give me the courage and love to speak to them, and may Your life and spirit be given to them." Now watch what God will do. The fields are ripe to harvest and multitudes are genuinely spiritually hungry.

Happy 2019! It will, indeed, for you, be a year of faith.

With you all the way,

Pastor Carter Conlon

GO AND GATHER THE EMPTY

by Carter Conlon

"A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried unto Elisha, saying, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves'" (2 Kings 4:1–2).

This woman had once been surrounded by the Word of God—where there was power and provision, a hope and a future. Yet, for some reason, the Word of the Lord had been taken from her household. She eventually found herself alone, and one day, an evil man—for only an evil man would do what he was about to do—arrived at the door and said, "Your children belong to me from this day forward. You do not have the resources or the power to stop me from taking them."

Vileness is being exalted as righteousness, and what is good is being cast down as evil. How do we meet this challenge?

We have a similar situation in our generation. The Bible tells us that *"the wicked prowl on every side, when vileness is exalted among the sons of men"*

(Psalm 12:8). Who can rationally deny that vileness has raised itself up to be the standard of behavior in our modern-day society—by killing children in the womb; causing gender confusion in our young children in grade school; lying about the existence of God; forbidding our sons and daughters to pray in high school; radicalizing our young people against both God and their country in our colleges? Vileness is being exalted as righteousness, and what is good, holy and true is being cast down as evil and bigoted. And so we ask ourselves today: How do we meet this challenge?

Let's start by taking a look at what happened to the widow in our opening passage. When the creditor was coming, she did what I suppose any mother would do: she shared her distress with the prophet Elisha—the only person of God left in the nation, to her knowledge.

"So Elisha said to her, 'What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house'" (2 Kings 4:2). Now Elisha had the power to do a lot of things, including the power of God to raise the dead. Yet he responded by turning to her and asking what she had in her house.

"And she said, 'Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar

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of oil” (2 Kings 4:2). The widow answered him by saying, “All I have is a jar of oil.” In other words, she was unaware of the power available to her if she would be willing to use what she had. Instead, she was totally focused on her distress, as is the case with many people today. “Lord, the wicked have come and are demanding our children.”

We may become so focused on the distress of this dark hour that we are in danger of forgetting what God has already put into our hands. Just as this widow said, “I have only a jar of oil,” we might say, “Oh, God, I have only my own salvation. I have only a little bit of strength left, yet this powerful force is coming to take away our hope and our future. It is taking the presence and sense of God out of the nation, and I do not know what to do. I feel like a widow. It has been so long, as a nation, since we have heard the piercing word of God. Where has the conscience of America gone? What hope do we have left? How do we stop this creditor from taking our sons and daughters and making them slaves to unrighteousness?”

We have access to the One who has all power and all knowledge and all authority!

Just as the widow had barely any oil left, we might have only a little bit of power left in our lives as a

church age. Nevertheless, we must not forget that we are the Bride of Christ. We have access to the One who has all power and all knowledge and all authority!

■ THE PLAN OF GOD

Elisha then said to the widow, “Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones.’ So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her, and she poured it out. Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, ‘Bring me another vessel.’...Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, ‘Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest’” (2 Kings 4:3–7).

“As you take the little bit that you have and pour it into the empty places, you will discover that I am a river of life flowing from inside of you.”

The oil just kept coming! She thought she had just a small amount, but she did not realize she was connected to a supply that never runs dry! That is what a spiritual awakening looks like! When we simply believe God, even when we have only little bit of oil, we can start pouring into others around us. In fact, I believe the plan of God for our day is to gather every empty person you know and begin to pour into them. Gather your empty friends; gather your empty neighbors;

and even send your children out to gather them in.

Perhaps you are a single mother with two children who have you worried. Tell them to get all those friends they are hanging out with and bring them to your home. Then tell your children to say to their friends, “I’m going to lay hands on you, and we are going to pray. We are going to believe that God will fill you with the Holy Spirit!”

The promise and the hope for our generation is God saying, “As you take the little bit that you have and pour it into the empty places, you will discover that I am a river of life flowing from inside of you.” After all, Jesus Himself promised, “Come to Me, and out of your belly, out of your inward parts, will flow this river of living water” (see John 7:37–38).

When Pastor Teresa and I first got saved, we did not know any better so we started laying hands on people, and many were filled with the Holy Spirit. One time Pastor Teresa had a Tupperware party in our home and a lady brought her husband, who was hostile to the gospel. Neither he nor I wanted to be around the party, so we went upstairs. As we conversed, I simply started talking to him about what God had done for me, and suddenly he said, “I want that in my life!” So I laid my hands on him and started to pray. The next thing I knew, he was lying on the floor speaking in tongues! All I did was reach out with the little life that I had, and that man is still walking with the Lord today.

Thank God for the simplicity of faith. No wonder Jesus told the Church of Ephesus, “You have your theology down and are testing and proving those

who say they are apostles. You have discernment and are doing a lot of good works—even more than at the beginning—but I have something against you: You have lost your first love. You have lost the simplicity of walking with God, the joy of just being a vessel through whom God can pour His life into others. If you do not get back to that, you will lose your ‘candlestick’” (see Revelation 2:1–5). In other words, if you do not use the oil you have, you will lose it. You will lose the light. Yes, you will still have your salvation and end up at the throne of God one day, but what the Lord could have done through your life to impact those around you will not happen.

■ GOD'S VESSELS

In the Book of Acts, we read of a hundred and twenty people gathered in an upper room—people who were emptied of self, essentially possessing only the oil of their own salvation. You might say they were empty vessels—empty of all sense of strength, empty of all the promises they had made to God—yet aware that their generation was about to be taken captive by the godlessness of that moment. After all, it does not get any more godless than killing the Son of God. Nevertheless, knowing their own limitations and fears, they began to pray in this upper room.

I can picture God the Father talking to His Son regarding those who were seeking more of Him. God said to Jesus, “May I borrow these empty vessels that have gathered in Your Name? May I borrow them and do something astounding through them?” And the Son answered, “Father, You are more than welcome to them.” And

right away, oil was pouring down into these hundred and twenty who had no strength in themselves. They left the Upper Room, walked out into the marketplace, and began pouring that oil out—and soon there were about five thousand new believers in Christ (see Acts 4:4).

You can either sit at home and stare at your little jar of oil and try to survive, or you can do what God says.

Think about it—the hundred and twenty did not have the New Testament; they were the New Testament! God’s Spirit was in them, and they were simply being used as vessels to pour into empty people. They learned that it was not in their strength but in their weakness that God’s power would be made known.

And so now you can either sit at home and stare at your little jar of oil and try to survive, hoping nobody will captivate your children, or you can do what God says—go and gather your neighbors. Find them on the street corners. Start pouring into the empty places. Pour unreservedly, for you have more resources than you know. You do not have to wait for some divine moment. You do not have to wait until you feel like you are on top of the world or you have a million dollars in the bank. You can start on the street today; you can pray for somebody, somewhere, right now.

This is the hope now for our nation. You will be shocked at how hungry

people are today. Remember, you do not have to sit there and debate theology with them. You can simply say, “Let me pray for you, and let God pour His Holy Spirit into your life.” Begin to gather and pour, believe and pray, and watch what God will do in this generation!

Carter Conlon
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NEW THINGS HAPPENING AT SUMMIT FOR THE NEW YEAR!

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone!

To start off the new year, we will be hosting our first ever Ministry and Career Conference this month. Students will be hearing from organizations like Times Square Church and World Challenge, exploring opportunities available to them as alumni of Summit.

We are excited to have a growing alumni network working in ministries all over the world. Our hope is that this conference will inspire each student and connect the dots between what God has called them to and real-life examples.

The Ministry and Career program serves as a student-alumni bridge program that focuses on teaching, one-on-one guidance, and hands-on ministry experience. Tools like our alumni marketplace offer a constant flow of volunteer, internship and job opportunities from ministries that want to work with students who have been trained and mentored with us.

We are honored to be able to empower students with a vision for the future. We pray that God will continue to guide and direct each one in 2019!



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 10AM | 1PM | 3PM | 6PM

Tuesday 7PM | Worldwide Prayer Meeting

Friday 7PM | The Gate
2nd & 4th Fridays (ages 18-29)

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

tsc.nyc