

Dear Friend,

Song of Solomon 1:4 begins with these incredible words: *"Draw me away!... We will run after you."*

This verse should bring hope to the weary heart that says, "Lord, how will my life ever make a difference for Your kingdom?"

Many of us are tired—wary from the battle, both the one inside and the one opposing us from without. You hold in your hands a letter asking one more thing of you which you may feel incapable of performing. "I know what to do," you say, "but how to perform it is beyond my ability."

The good news is that you are in good company. You have become one in heart and experience with Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Esther, Gideon, Hannah, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and the apostles Peter and Paul, just to name a few. I think you get the point.

God is not asking you and me to do something for Him, but rather to let Him do what only He can do—through us. This kind of calling comes in our times of weakness rather than when we feel the strongest.

What, then, does He require of us? I think Mary said it best: *"Let it be to me according to your word"* (Luke 1:38). So, before even reading this newsletter, lower it for a moment and say: "Lord, draw me and I will go in the direction where You are leading."

With you on the journey,

Pastor Carter Conlon

IT'S TIME TO GO THROUGH YOUR OPEN DOOR

by Carter Conlon

"So Cornelius said, 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God'" (Acts 10:30–33).

This was the beginning of a phenomenal moment in history. The Scripture says that Cornelius was a man with a deep reverence for God (see Acts 10:1–2). He was a generous man, a seeker of God, yet the fullness of salvation was not yet revealed to him. Nevertheless, he had an inner hunger for God and he had even gathered his family and close friends into his house. You see, when you are hungry for God, people will gather around you. They will listen to what you have to say, for they, too, are looking for hope. They are looking for a way forward in their season of struggle and amidst their own fears.

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every

nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins'" (Acts 10:34–43).

Peter began to speak about how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. Now we do not know exactly what was going on in Cornelius' heart. We can only surmise that he was wondering something along the lines of, "Is it possible that that could

be mine? Could God also anoint me with the Holy Spirit and with power? As Christ once did, can I go about doing good and healing all who are oppressed by the devil?"

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:44–48).

There is no limit to what God can do through a hungry heart.

God is a gentleman and He does not force Himself on anybody. There must have been such a yearning in the hearts of these people that when Peter started speaking, they knew his words were divinely inspired. While Peter was still speaking, suddenly the Holy Spirit descended, and the people became God-gripped and began to speak with other tongues! In other words, the very thing that happened at Pentecost to the Jewish believers was now happening to the Gentile believers. They were speaking about the wonderful works of God with an ability that only God could give!

■ THROUGH ONE MAN

Isn't it incredible that this one man, Cornelius, became the open door to the Gentile world? Up until this point, the gospel was only for the Jew. Yet, suddenly, the door opened through one hungry heart. Cornelius could not take the gospel to the

Gentile world—it would have been foolish for him to try—but God could do it through him.

In the same way, when you are willing to open your heart to God's will, beginning with your own household, and then to your friends, neighbors, and even people in places you have never been, you will discover that there is no limit to what God can do through a hungry heart.

When I was young I was very fearful, especially afraid of people in crowded rooms. I felt I had little to offer the kingdom of God, but I did have a hungry heart. I was walking the beat one day as a young cop, and I just started praying, "Lord, I want to win 100,000 people to You before I die." Then I began to be very specific in my prayer. "I don't want them to just be people who raise their hand in a service somewhere. I want them to be people who actually live for You and end up at Your throne. You will be able to look them in the eye and say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Now at this point, I had never preached a sermon. I had no ability to speak in public whatsoever. But I had a hungry heart, and I was willing to embrace the impossible. I said, "God, I am asking You to do something so far beyond me."

Fast-forward many years later to when I was standing in the fields of Nigeria, in the midst of a civil war. By local estimates, there were somewhere between 400,000 to 700,000 people gathered. You could not see an end to the crowd in any direction. I remember that first night preaching to nominal Christians, Christians, and Muslims, and talking about the worthlessness of all religion that has no compassion for its neighbor. I asked people if they were willing to open their hearts

to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and about 100,000 people raised their hands to receive Christ!

I went back to my hotel room, and it suddenly dawned on me that in one hour, God had answered a prayer I had prayed years ago when all I had was a hungry heart. I got down on my knees beside my bed to give God thanks, and the first thing He spoke to my heart was, "Carter, don't limit Me. Don't put boundaries around Me. There is no limit to what can be accomplished through a hungry heart!"

You still believe that all things are possible with Me. And so I have set before you an open door.

■ THOUGH YOU HAVE LITTLE STRENGTH

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus spoke to a particular church in Philadelphia, saying, *"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name"* (Revelation 3:8). In other words, "I know your heart hungers for Me; I know you want My presence in your life. I also know you do not have a lot of confidence in yourself or in your own abilities, but I have set before you an open door that no one can shut."

I feel God is speaking the same thing to somebody reading this today. "You only have a little strength, but you have kept My Word the best you knew how. You have tried to walk with Me, and you have not denied My name by allowing unbelief to grip your heart. You still believe that I can do what I say I will do. You still believe that all things are possible

with Me. And so I have set before you an open door, and as you go through it, I will do something so powerful in and through you that people will have to acknowledge that I have loved you.”

“Lord, there are people who say it cannot be done, but I don’t believe that. I don’t believe there is anything You cannot do!”

Pastor Teresa and I have known this in our lives. We have not brought to you a theory about God but an experience with Him. We have walked with God and seen what He can do. He set before us an open door, and we walked through it with little strength and no idea where it was going to lead. There was a time when Pastor Teresa and I, along with a local bus driver, started meeting every Tuesday night to pray. We were simply asking God to do what only He could do in an area of Canada that had received no lasting testimony of Christ for more than 100 years. This forty-square mile region was known as a pastoral burnout area; in fact, I was told that nothing anybody had ever tried survived there. Yet God took three people with no strength, no training, and no ability. What we did have was a hunger to see God move.

I would pray, “Lord, there are people who say it cannot be done, but I don’t believe that. I don’t believe there is anything You cannot do! I don’t believe there is any situation You cannot change. I simply refuse to believe that there is an area of the country where

You cannot break through. God, for the sake of the people and for the glory of Your name, do something in this area!”

One night we broke through with a surge of joy! We knew we had passed through a veil of some sort, and the joy of the Lord that hit us was unspeakable! We were all in different areas of the living room, praying, when suddenly I started laughing. I was in the corner, thinking, “Boy, this is so irreverent. I shouldn’t be laughing.” I tried to suppress it, but my shoulders were shaking as joy bubbled up within me. Then I turned around and saw Pastor Teresa’s shoulders shaking. Then I looked at the bus driver and he was laughing, too. The joy of the Lord hit all of us!

Yield to God’s plan for your life. He has something in mind that is so much bigger than anything you ever thought your life could amount to.

Suddenly, just a little door had opened. God began to call us to go through that door, and the rest is history. Churches were established, and many people came to Christ. In fact, people are still being fed there today. Going through that door led us into many different places and, ultimately, to New York City.

And so I encourage you to yield to God’s plan for your life. You have no idea what He is willing to do through you. He has something in mind that is so much bigger than anything you

ever thought your life could amount to. But it starts with a hungry heart and then one little step of faith, and then another step. Just keep going through every door He opens, and He will give you His Word, His plan, and His Spirit. He will fill you with courage, and you will be amazed at the difference your life will make in this generation!

Carter Conlon
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25 YEARS AT SUMMIT

Congratulations to the Class of 2019! This year's commencement marks our 25th anniversary, and we are honored to walk alongside our graduates on this milestone occasion.

There is something nostalgic about anniversaries; they signify the passage of time and cause us to reflect, look back and be grateful.

For 25 years, we have had the privilege of helping our students build the biblical foundations that shape their lives. Over the years, Summit has grown and evolved in our practices, but the core of our existence—training men and women for ministry through a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ—has remained our cornerstone.

As we make plans for another graduating class to head beyond our gates, we realize how faithful God has been to each one of us and just how much there is to be grateful for!

A Note from Pastor Carter:

Congratulations to our newest group of Summit alumni! It is amazing to see what God is doing through the lives of Summit graduates all over the world. I recently had the privilege of attending the wedding of one of our Summit alumni in Uganda, Africa. The Lord is doing remarkable things in this young man's ministry and life.

Many of our students and graduates have been given the opportunity to attend Summit because of scholarship sponsors like you. Thank you for investing in the next generation—you may never know on this side of eternity just how far that investment will go!

If you would like to sponsor a student for the 2019/2020 school year, please visit summitpa.org/give



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