

Dear Friend,

Pastor Teresa and I, along with a few friends, recently experienced something very few in this country have been blessed with. We were treated to a turkey dinner at a home built in 1790 on the site of the very first Thanksgiving in America. Those first pilgrims who set foot on this soil in 1620 were celebrating the goodness of God with their new friends, the native peoples who had so graciously welcomed them.

Though still facing hardship, the pilgrims had a promise from God that they were being established in a new place where all could worship Jesus Christ free from the impositions and dictates of tyranny. Over half of them gave their lives in this quest—and because of their sacrifice you and I live in one of the greatest and freest nations on this earth.

The time has come when you and I must strive to preserve what they sacrificed for. Today, ask the Lord for a spirit of thanksgiving for all He has done. Next, ask Him to show you what part you can play in preserving that which so many handed to us through hardship and peril to their lives. Ask Him today what He would have you do.

The Word of God implores us to *"be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (Philippians 4:6).

Yours, with thanksgiving,

Pastor Carter Conlon

ESCAPING THE TASKMASTERS

by Carter Conlon

"And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:6–8).

Even though Joseph was taken into captivity in Egypt, during that captivity the presence of the Lord was on his life and he was given great wisdom. God used Joseph to spare the nation of Egypt from a great famine, which also affected all the known world at that time. The people would have died had it not been for him. However, we see in this verse that this new king did not know the history of Joseph's accomplishments.

As has happened throughout history, people tend to forget where their blessing is coming from. Today in America, people are even deliberately trying to erase the past—the formation of this nation, our godly heritage, the origin of our laws and social order.

The king at this time in Egypt said to his people, *"Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we"* (Exodus 1:9). It is amazing that he recognized something the people of God no longer recognized. Similarly, do you realize that seventy-one percent of Americans today still believe in

God? Do you know that the majority of people in this country still believe the Bible is a holy book? Do you understand that as we face this onslaught of godlessness, the people who still believe in God are actually more and mightier than the godless in our midst?

So the king said, *"Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land"* (Exodus 1:10). And so taskmasters were set over them to afflict them with their burdens and they were forced to build supply cities for Pharaoh. Nevertheless, the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied.

Darkness always has a strategy to keep the people of God from rising up within their society. In this case, it was a four-fold strategy. As history repeats itself over and over again, it is good for us to study the Word of God so that we can be prepared. Therefore, let's take a closer look at what happened.

■ A FOUR-FOLD STRATEGY

The first strategy was to keep the people of God convinced that they were fewer and weaker than they actually were, using whatever means available. It was basically a type of psychological warfare. We see this in action today as we are marginalized, ridiculed, and

declared to be losing influence. Many Christians in our day have bought into the lie that we are living in a post-Christian society, which is actually not true. Yet these Christians have been convinced by the voices of godlessness that what once brought blessing to our nation is now obsolete.

God help us to recognize the evil of this moment and declare, “Enough of this!”

The second strategy was to keep the people of God focused on building things which were neither eternal nor in line with their actual purpose in the world. Remember, God told Abraham that He would bless him and his descendants to be a blessing in all the world—and that He would make His name known through them (see Genesis 12:2–3).

You and I are called to build the kingdom of God. We are to be an influence every day to the people around us—bringing the savor of Christ everywhere we go. We can speak with the power and authority of God. But there are taskmasters who sometimes come into the house of God, causing the people to focus on building things that are of no eternal value.

I am sure there were motivational speakers there telling the Hebrews, “Wow! That is a really nice pyramid you just built! I can hardly wait to see the next one.” So they continued hauling bricks and building buildings, though this was not their purpose on the earth. Their purpose was to bring glory to God; to be a people who were a wonder, causing others in society to say, “Who is their God and how do they get to be such a people?”

The third strategy was to threaten them. *“Also the officers of the*

children of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, ‘Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?’” (Exodus 5:14). In other words, “Do things our way. Do no more and no less than what we tell you to do or it will get very, very hard for you.” Perhaps you live in a work environment that is just like that. You are told to keep your mouth shut, and everything will go well. If a discussion about marriage comes up in the lunchroom, you have been trained not to share your biblical worldview or things will be very difficult for you.

When God’s people cry out to Him, His heart explodes with the desire to show Himself powerful and compassionate once again.

Lastly, and worst of all, go after their children—their future, their source of strength. Pharaoh instructed the Hebrew midwives, *“When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live”* (Exodus 1:16). And when that failed, the decree went out to the people of Egypt that if they saw a male child who had survived out of the womb, they were to throw him into the river (see Exodus 1:22).

This is essentially what is happening in our day. Our children are being murdered inside as well as outside the womb. Others are being thrown into the river of confusion— forbidden to pray, becoming gender-confused, and becoming radicalized by Marxists against both God and

country in their schools. God help us to recognize the evil of this moment and declare, “Enough of this!”

■ WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE CRY OUT

The good news is that when God’s people rise up and cry out to Him, His heart explodes with the desire to show Himself powerful and compassionate once again. We see this in Exodus 3 when 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”* (Exodus 3:7). God was saying, “I am not distant from their struggles. I am not far away somewhere and merely receive a report of their cries. No, I have heard them Myself!”

“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” (Exodus 3:8). It would be the same as God saying to you today, “Some power of darkness is occupying the place where you are supposed to bring glory to Me. But I have heard your cry and I am going to raise you up. You are going to drive every last one of them out of that place where you belong, and you are going to become the person that I have called you to be.”

“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 3:9–10).

God was about to show them the way back to victory. Try to picture it: You have been in captivity for hundreds of years—marginalized,

ridiculed, made to serve with rigor. And you have taskmasters over you. But you call out to God, and one day the answer comes walking into town—an 80-year-old man with his 83-year-old brother! All Moses had was a stick in his hand and a one-line sermon: “Let My people go that they may serve Me in the wilderness.” God was showing them the same thing He is trying to speak to us again today—that His strength begins when our strength ends.

Do not rely on somebody else’s revelation, but read the Bible yourself.

■ INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXODUS

Later, in Exodus 12, we find God’s specific instructions for their deliverance, which is very similar to the instructions that He would give to us today. The Lord spoke to Moses: “*Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household’*” (Exodus 12:3). In other words, “Start eating of the lamb in your own house. Get into the Word. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, the Bread of Life.” Jesus Himself said to His disciples, “If you do not eat of My flesh, if you do not eat or partake of the victory I am winning for you, you will have no life in you.” We must get back into the Word of God in our homes. Do not rely on somebody else’s revelation, but read the Bible yourself. If you have a hard time, ask God to give you the ability to comprehend it.

Next, they were told to reach out to their neighbors. “*And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it*

according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb” (Exodus 12:4). When you start getting into the Word of God, you will find a supply—promises, vision and hope for the future. Soon it will begin to overflow. And when that happens, do what God told these people to do—reach out to somebody who has nothing and invite them into your fellowship. Get into community.

“*They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it [the lamb]*” (Exodus 12:7). Set yourself apart for God. Don’t live with one foot in the church and one foot in the world. Choose this day whom you will serve. Put the blood of the Lamb on the doorpost of your house and say, as Joshua did, “*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*” (Joshua 24:15).

Don’t live with one foot in the church and one foot in the world. Choose this day whom you will serve.

“*Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it*” (Exodus 12:8). Leaven always speaks of hypocrisy. In other words, “Eat the Word of God without hypocrisy; eat the bitter with the sweet. Read it all—the things you want to read and the things you don’t want to read.”

He continued, “*And thus you shall eat it; with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand*” (Exodus 12:11). If you are going to do these things, get ready for a journey. Your life is going to change!

God is going to take you to a place that belongs to you—a place He has ordained for you. He will give you power, and you will be able to conquer all by the presence of God that goes with you.

Are we going to stand by while our families are destroyed? Or are we going to rise up and proclaim, “I am going with God!”?

And so my question for you today is: Would you like to escape the taskmasters? That is essentially what Moses had to ask the people. Are we going to let our children be taken captive, killed, thrown into the river? Are we going to stand by while our families are destroyed? Are we going to let the unrighteous dominate our future and further marginalize and oppress the people of God? Or are we going to rise up, take our place, and proclaim, “I am going with God!”

If that is the cry of your heart today, just watch what God will do. He will start fighting your enemies. New strength will come into your life and new vision will come into your eyes. Compassion will flood your heart, you will walk with God-given authority, and many people will be set free!

Carter Conlon
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I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS!

Dominique is a bubbly twenty-something from New Jersey. When she was nine years old, her mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. “It was life changing for my parents,” she says. “I didn’t grow up in church, but when that happened, they started asking questions about God and wanting to find meaning in life.” Thankfully, her mom’s cancer was caught early, and today she is fine. “After that, we started going to church. Some friends of ours brought us to Times Square Church in New York City, and my family loved it.” They started attending every Sunday.

“My parents would wake up my siblings and me at 6 AM every Sunday and then drive into the city to make sure we got to church early. My mom liked to save seats. All our Bibles lined up in a row—middle section, a few rows back. Then we would head across the street to get bagels and wait for church to start.”

When Times Square Church opened a satellite campus in New Jersey a few years later, Dominique was excited—

mainly because it meant they could all sleep a little longer in the morning.



“I wanted to study interior design,” she said, “but when a Summit Missions Week team came to work with our TSC North Jersey campus, I had a chance to talk to students and hear their stories. I realized that they weren’t perfect Bible scholars. They were normal people like me.” That interaction changed her perspective of ministry school. She smiles and her eyes light up when I ask her what Summit is really like. “I didn’t think it would be like this! I’m having fun. I’m learning so much, and I’m a different person than I was.”



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 | Young Adults Connect
 Emerge Event (18–35)
 Teens Night (1st Friday)
 Small Groups
 Special Events

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

tsc.nyc