

Dear Friend,

In 2 Corinthians 8:1–5, the apostle Paul spoke of believers who generously gave to the work of God, even though they themselves were in great need. They must have observed something of real integrity in God's work that propelled them to do so.

At Times Square Church we continue to use your financial gifts for the maximum benefit of the Kingdom of God. For example, during the COVID-19 epidemic we have worked extensively with partner organizations across New York City, helping people navigate through their hardships. We have also partnered with schools and first responders to help with the many needs they encounter.

Internationally, we continue to support humanitarian needs in Israel, Haiti, Honduras, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Colombia, just to name a few. In addition, we remain committed to providing scholarships and training for young people from all over the world (see summitpa.org).

Under Pastor Tim Dilena's leadership, TSC will be launching new online connect groups, including new believers' courses for the one thousand people who have come to salvation in Christ during our COVID-19 shutdown! So, you see, with your help, the work not only goes on but prospers!

It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider an end-of-year financial gift. May the Lord Jesus bless you.

Wishing you and your loved ones a very merry Christmas!

Yours, in Christ,
Pastor Carter Conlon

EATING THE FOOD OF THE LAND by Carter Conlon

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:3–9).

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There is no greater reputation than being God, but the Scriptures tell us that Jesus made Himself of no reputation. He came down from on high and walked among us, suffered our infirmities, and then went to a cross to pay the price for our sins. And now Paul

instructs us in this passage, "Let this mind be in you." As the Church of Jesus Christ, we need to once again see the needs and sufferings of the people all around us. We must make a choice to move toward them—just as the Son of God moved toward us. Yes, this will involve a whole new mind—the mind of Christ—which means we must stop looking only for our own comfort and security. As Paul says, we must consider "the interests of others." We must choose to be obedient, even if it takes us to a place of suffering.

■ A RECKONING

The generation of Israelites who came out of bondage in Egypt were an example of those who refused to make that choice. They ultimately decided not to go into the place of promise that God intended for them—a decision that was based on self-preservation. They looked at the size of the giants; they saw the fortifications of cities that God told them would belong to them. And then, out of fear, they drew the conclusion, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we... The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we

were like grasshoppers in our own sight” (Numbers 13:31–33). Sadly, in every generation, there are Christians who make that choice, and they end up living in a spiritual wilderness. Though it is not a place of total defeat, it is not a place of victory. Their life has no influence, they conquer nothing for God, and they do not operate in the supernatural.

However, in the book of Joshua, we see a new generation arise. They had been raised in the wilderness, but they were being called by God to go into the place of promise that their forefathers had chosen not to enter. This generation stepped up and made the choice to obey and fight. It is phenomenal when you begin to consider that, in a sense, they were actually fighting for you and me. They were paving the pathway that would ultimately lead to Christ’s being born in the Promised Land. Of course, after His death and resurrection, Jesus became our “promised land.” Our life, our hope, our mind, our wisdom, our victory, our future is in Him. Every promise of God no longer resides in a physical land—they are now all found in the person of Jesus Christ.

Now before they went in, *“The Lord said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come up out of Egypt”* (Joshua 5:2–4). Circumcision was a covenant—in this case, a whole new generation committing to God: “Our forefathers may have chosen security over Your glory, but we are going to follow You, Lord.” And so

they had to endure the shame, pain, and separation of circumcision. It began with exposure—an admission in their hearts: “I am not everything I should be. God is calling me to more.”

God is bringing His Church into a place of reckoning. He is trying to remind us once again what we are supposed to be.

Likewise, I believe God is bringing His Church into a place of reckoning. He is trying to remind us once again what we are supposed to be. Many of God’s people have lived in the wilderness far too long—out of Egypt, but not in the place God promised. Yes, they have come out from under the penalty of sin, but they have not become what God wanted them to be—not conquering the things God called them to conquer.

We have had no passion for prayer because, in many cases, we were content to dwell in a dry place without the mind of Christ. However, we have reached a point where there must be a reckoning with the failures of the past; otherwise we will not go to where God is calling us. We will simply justify who we are and blame somebody else for the mess that our nation is in.

You and I must ask the Lord to give us the grace to go further than what others say is far enough; the grace to suffer so that the sufferings of others may cease. Yes, there is a certain pain that comes with separation. There is the pain of putting away old practices, old relationships, old ways of thinking, and becoming

separated unto God. Embracing that separation means saying, “I am going to be identified as a follower of Jesus Christ from this day forward.” No more hiding in the closet. I am sure you are aware that it is going to cost you to have a biblical opinion. But if we are ever going to know the power of God manifested through our lives, we must be willing to stand up and be separated.

■ CROSSING INTO THE PROMISED LAND

The Scripture then tells us: *“They ate of the produce of the land on the day after Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year”* (Joshua 5:11–12).

If we are going to fully become what God has intended us to be, His promises are going to be the only food that will keep us.

In the season when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, there was a grace covering them called manna. It is amazing to think that God gave them this bread from heaven while they were still uncircumcised—while they still had not made the decision to go into the Promised Land. Similarly, each of us is given this incredible grace when we come to Christ. Although we are immediately forgiven of our sins, it can be a long time before we decide to actually go in and become what God has called us to be. In that season, God still rains His

provision on us—showering us with His favor, keeping and sustaining us. Nevertheless, there is a time when childishness needs to be put away and we must become sons and daughters of God. There comes a point when the calling and mind of Christ must become ours again.

The bitterness, division, and godlessness has now gone too deep for any kind of human response to adequately deal with it. We need a divine response.

The day the Israelites made the choice to go into the place of promise was the first day they began to eat the food of the land. I love how the original King James Version says, “*They did not eat of the old corn of the land*” (Joshua 5:11 KJV). In our day, I believe this would be like going back to what the Bible says a Christian really is—returning to the old truths that somehow got hidden in this self-consumed generation that has chosen to live in the wilderness.

You see, when we make the choice to cross into the place that God is calling us to, suddenly the old food of the land becomes available to us again. We start reading passages of Scripture that perhaps have largely been forgotten in our generation, and we discover that the Word is coming to life. This is critical, for if we are going to fully become

what God has intended us to be, His promises are going to be the only food that will keep us.

■ A SERIOUS CALL

We see in the Bible the first thing that happened after the Israelites began to eat the food of the land was that Jericho fell. They did not have to do anything but march around the city and shout! God gave them a marvelous victory over a fortified place that was declaring its dominance over the Promised Land.

We have many strongholds in our society today as well—in our cities, in our culture. I believe that the bitterness, division, and godlessness has now gone too deep for any kind of human response to adequately deal with it. We need a divine response—which God always releases through His people. He ties the working of His hand to you and me, and that is why He charges us, “*Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 2:5).

I am not going to suggest to you that this “eating of the food of the land” is going to be easy. The early Church knew this, and churches in some of the persecuted countries around the world today know this as well. And though we in America have largely chosen to live in the wilderness, we no longer have that option. It is a do-or-die moment for the Church of Jesus Christ in this nation.

I hope that you are seriously considering the call of God on your life, just as I am. Jesus shed His blood and gave His body for us. The Scripture tells us that we are now called to deny ourselves, take

up our cross and follow Him (see Matthew 16:24). We cannot put away this old truth or attempt to make it palatable.

Some of us may suffer in the days ahead. However, I want you to always remember that even if you consider yourself weak, you are mighty in God. Simply yield to Him and trust Him for the grace to get up and go forward, understanding that He has an incredible plan for your life. Let His power and life flow through you; let the mind of Christ be in you!

Carter Conlon
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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SUMMIT

Dear Friends,

In the fall of 1863, in the midst of a Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln announced that the nation would pause for a day of thanks on the fourth Thursday in November, making the annual tradition an official holiday. Given the circumstances the country faced, a celebration of thanks may have seemed misplaced. But, to many, there was a fundamental understanding of God’s character that stirred them to thank Him, to pray, and to ask for His mercy in the gravest of circumstances.

Likewise, beloved, my hope for this holiday season is that we also take a moment to stop and reflect, not on the things we don’t have but on the things we do. The life and hope Christ has given us cannot be taken or shaken.

Remember this—the enemy fears a people who choose to rejoice and choose to be grateful in a time of great difficulty. The power of praise and thanksgiving can give us renewed vision for the future. And that is why, no matter if the times be good or bad, we as the people of God can be rallied to remember His faithfulness and give thanks.

God is good! He will give us the grace to endure, to proclaim, and to live in the miraculous. I have seen, year after year, the Lord pour out His Spirit on this next generation. They are rising and they are not deterred. They have faced much uncertainty yet remain



joyful and steadfast; with eyes set forward and hearts filled with hope. Let us follow their example. The best is yet to come.

From our Summit family to yours, may your Christmas season be filled with thankfulness, joy, and peace. The Lord is with you and He loves you very much.

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Teresa Conlon
President
Summit International School of Ministry

Carter Conlon is General Overseer of Times Square Church, Inc. He joined the pastoral staff as an associate pastor in 1994 and was senior pastor from 2001 to 2020.

Times Square Church is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City, founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.”

Senior Pastor
Tim Dilena

Church Online
Sunday 10 AM & On demand
Tuesday 7 PM (Prayer Service)

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