

Dear Friend,

I am writing this letter to you today from Dublin, Ireland. Today, I am so keenly aware that ungodly forces are being unleashed everywhere against Biblical truth and true morality. No-one and no place is being spared this end-time onslaught. It seems to have come suddenly and is progressing with ferocity. As it states in Revelation 12:12, "...For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." However, I don't want you to be discouraged at this thought today. For there is altogether another, yet to be fully realized, side to this story. For Isaiah 59:19 holds out a great promise to you and I in spite of the hour. "...When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him." God's promise in this darkened hour is to raise us up and give both you and I the power not only to withstand the evil, but to actually be enabled of His Spirit to push back its influence. The great blessing promised to many through the church of Jesus Christ is that evil will be exposed for what it is, lose its hoped-for influence and control, and many who were once in the clutches of its deception be set free! Today, ask Jesus for the fullness of His power to be released in and through your life. Somebody is waiting for you to come into their lives and push back the darkness. It's time to pray!

Yours, in Christ,
Pastor Carter Conlon

THE REAL JESUS DOESN'T BURN

Carter Conlon

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians 3:10-13).

In this portion of Scripture, the apostle Paul was essentially saying, "I have brought to you the real Jesus. I have laid a foundation of truth for you as the people of God. The real Jesus will never fail you; He will not forsake you; He will walk with you through the fire. Whatever you have to go through, He promises to go with you."

It is important to hold on to this truth, for we are entering a difficult season as a society that is not unlike the ones people of previous times have had to pass through. You see, there have been times throughout history when the world became hostile to the Word of God, the presence of God, and ultimately the people of God.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the social condition in such a season: "No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity... Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey" (Isaiah 59:4, 14-15).

THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES THROUGHOUT HISTORY WHEN THE WORLD BECAME HOSTILE TO THE WORD OF GOD, THE PRESENCE OF GOD, AND ULTIMATELY THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

At this time, the people of God were about to come under persecution because they had dealt casually with God's Word. And as Romans chapter 1 warns us, when any nation deals falsely with the truth, they are given over to a depraved mind, and they begin to do everything that the sinful heart of man has always longed to do apart from God's restrictions. They call that which is unholy, holy and they begin to call that which is good, evil.

Furthermore, the culture itself turns against those who believe that God's Word is the standard of truth. Many of you today cannot speak the truth of God's Word in your workplace. As soon as you do so, you are considered a hater. You could even be in danger of losing your employment. Sadly, the Word of God warns that the true gospel will be attacked in the last days—from without as well as from within the professing Church. Many people do not realize that the gospel has been attacked for a few decades in our nation. We are just waking up and beginning to realize what has been happening.

I DO NOT WANT YOU TO FIND OUT AT SOME POINT THAT THE JESUS YOU HAVE EMBRACED IS NOT THE REAL CHRIST.

Paul said to his young protege, Timothy, *"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables"* (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

The interesting thing about turning aside "fables" is that it does not necessarily refer to lies. The Greek word simply means "good stories." There will be a lust for entertainment in the house of God. Many people will begin to gather around storytellers rather than preachers of the gospel. These stories may have a moral to them, and they might even bring you to tears. But if they are not the Word of God, they have no power to transform your life.

Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, *"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!"*

(2 Corinthians 11:3-4). In other words, "I fear for you being so open to entertainment that somebody might come and present to you another Jesus."

Build-A-Jesus

Build-A-Bear is a popular store in many malls throughout the country. I went there with some of my grandchildren one time and discovered what fun it is to build bears. When you go into the Build-A-Bear store, the first thing you do is pick an image of a bear that appeals to you. Does that sound familiar? In the last few decades, many churches in America have just been franchise operations for "Build-A-Jesus!" You pick an image of Jesus that you like and then find a church that caters to it.

After selecting an image, the next thing you get to do at Build-a-Bear is choose the stuffing. Just like you might get to choose what will go inside this Jesus you are building. If some of the parts of the Bible seem a little too hard, you get to eliminate it and just put all the soft stuff in there instead—all the nice, fluffy words. Then you choose his eyes—what he decides to see. Perhaps a Build-A-Jesus overlooks sin. Next you get to choose his heart. You can even write things on the heart of your Build-A-Bear! So let's take out all the warnings about sin and anything that makes you uncomfortable. And lastly, you get to record your voice and put it inside the bear so that when you pull the string, it says what you want it to say! When you pull the string of your Build-A-Jesus, His voice sounds a lot like you! Does that sound like some of the doctrines that have gone around in this nation for a couple of decades?

Jesus says in John 14:6, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* You cannot get to the Father's hand except through the real Jesus. There is no genuine security in this world if you have a Build-A-Jesus in your heart. There is only one Jesus that will survive the coming fire. Remember, you and I are going to go into a season of trial. We have warned you from this pulpit for many, many years. The world as we know it is launching a wholesale and perhaps a final rebellion against the lordship of Jesus Christ. The lawlessness is not going to get better; the deception is going to get deeper. There is going to be a revulsion against Christ and the people of God that will intensify until the Lord Himself returns and intervenes. I am writing about this today because I do not want you to burn in the fire. I do not want you to find out at some point that the Jesus you have embraced is not the real Christ.

Remember our opening scripture when Paul said, *“the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is”* (1 Corinthians 3:13). A trial will test the Jesus that you’ve laid hold of. I understand this from some of the past experiences in my own life. Pastor Teresa and I have gone through fire, the loss of all things. We have gone through a flood; we have gone through sickness and trials. But by the grace of God, the real Jesus has walked with us through it all. If you have a living relationship with the Son of God, nothing and no one can triumph over you!

Three Who Refused to Bow

In the book of Daniel, we read about a season when a king called Nebuchadnezzar decided he was going to erect an image of himself and command the people to bow down to it. *“At the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace”* (Daniel 3:5–6). Does that sound like the day we are living in? Once again, fallen man says, *“We will tell you what truth is. We will tell you what society should look like. And you will agree with us—you will bend, you will bow, and you will do it our way. If you don’t, it is going to get exceedingly hot for you.”*

IF YOU HAVE A LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SON OF GOD, NOTHING AND NO ONE CAN TRIUMPH OVER YOU!

Three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, sat over the affairs of the province of Babylon. That means they had a good income; they had influence and authority. But suddenly, in the midst of all this, they had to make a choice: Do we bow to this other image or do we hold to the true image of God? And the report came that these three young men refused to bow to the cultural order of the day.

Nebuchadnezzar called them in and said, *“Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have*

set up? Now if you ... do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:14–15).

They answered the king, *“If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up”* (Daniel 3:17–18). So the king, in his fury, commanded the furnace be heated seven times hotter—so hot that it killed the people that threw the three young men into it. But suddenly he said to his counselors, *“I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God”* (3:25).

Untouched by the Fire

This is my point: The real Jesus doesn’t burn, nor do those who are in His hand. The flames of fire could not touch the Hebrew boys. Each of us, too, must decide today: Who will we serve? If you are serving a Build-A-Jesus, then you will probably have no problem bowing your knee. When you pull the string, your Jesus will tell you it is okay to do that. But remember, it is not the voice of the Son of God but rather your own selective truth.

The end result of these three young men refusing to bend their knee is that the laws of the land were changed. Likewise, if we want to see change in our society, God’s people are going to be required to speak the truth and they must be willing to suffer whatever the consequences may be. Oh, may God give us the love and courage to refuse to bow to anyone but the real Jesus—that we might be able to stand and make a difference in this generation!

Carter Conlon
©2022 Times Square Church

This newsletter is an edited version of **“THE REAL JESUS DOESN’T BURN”**, a sermon given on **February 6, 2022**. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at tsc.nyc. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without permission from Times Square Church. Scripture taken from the New Kings James Version©. Copyright ©1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture taken from other versions are noted.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: BEN'S STORY



In the months leading up to my senior year of high school, I had four different moments that helped me consider Summit as my next step for education and a commitment to serve God. One day after school, I was hanging out with my pastor, and he mentioned that Times Square Church had a Bible school. A few weeks later, his wife stopped me after church and asked I had ever heard of Summit International School of Ministry. I didn't think much about either conversation. Then, I was in math class, and a close family friend texted me. She had been praying for me and asked if I'd ever heard of Summit. Hearing about

Summit from three different people in one month got my attention, and I started to pray to see if God wanted me to go to Summit. Meanwhile, I continued with the usual college search process.

The summer before senior year, I heard a sermon from Pastor Tim Dilena. He was talking about Mark 14, where a woman poured an alabaster vial of very expensive perfume on Jesus. Pastor Tim said someone's alabaster vial, giving up everything for Jesus, could be going to Summit.

I had narrowed my choices for college down to either a school where I was in the running for a great scholarship, or Summit, which I had never visited and did not know much about. While I was thinking and praying, I went to my usual Bible reading. That night, it was Mark 14, the same passage Pastor Tim had shared in the sermon I heard. I read about the alabaster vial and had peace in my heart that I should go to Summit. By coming here, I knew I would get more than theological knowledge; my experience would be about spiritual transformation.

Something that has changed since I came to Summit is my perception of ministry. I thought ministry was a pastor, worship leader, or someone in a church office. Here at Summit, I've learned that true ministry looks like ministering unto the Lord first, and then ministering wherever you are. Living for the benefit of others doesn't have to be in a church setting; it can be in an office job or hospital, for example.

Summit encourages us to be visionary, to pray bigger prayers and believe God to do the impossible while being faithful with the "little" things He asks us to do. I'm praying about where He wants me to be after Summit. I would love to work in a local church, but more so, I just want to serve.

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

Worldwide Prayer Meeting
Tuesday 7 PM

Church Location
237 West 51st Street
New York, NY 10019
(Between Broadway & 8th Ave.)

Mailing Address
Times Square Church
1657 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10019

Tel: 212-541-6300

Email: info@tsc.nyc

tsc.nyc

