

Dear Friend,

In Matthew 21:22, we read this incredible promise from Jesus Himself: *"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."* I believe the time has come for you and me, as the Church of Jesus Christ, to rediscover our identity and position.

The story in this newsletter is part of a three-message series on prayer that I recently presented. The other two messages from the book of Esther are, "Do You Know Who You Are?" and "Royal Horses." I recommend that you listen to all three in succession, the one in this letter is the second message.

The time has come to pray! The incivility, lying and cursing today shows us that we are in all-out spiritual warfare for the social and spiritual future of this country. I can't overstate the severity of this moment and the absolute imperative you and I have of taking up our rightful position at the throne of God again. There are only two alternatives ahead for this nation—a spiritual renewal or a plunge into darkness that could last well beyond our days.

Esther knew the peril of the hour. May you and I be fully aware of our times, as well. I sincerely look forward to your joining with me and others at the throne of our almighty and merciful God!

Yours, in Christ,
Pastor Carter Conlon

INVITING THE DEVIL TO DINNER

by Carter Conlon

Jesus once said, *"The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

There is a conflict going on, a war in the heavens, and people who live in godlessness unwittingly become pawns of it. Their hearts are opened to darkness, and they begin to move their hand against what they know is dearest to the heart of God. For example, in the book of Esther, we read of a man called Haman who worked his way up in government to virtually second in authority. He wanted everybody to bow before him—to bow to his view of what society should look like. However, a certain people group refused to bend to ungodliness. This group was represented by one man at the gate named Mordecai—a devout follower of God. Haman became inflamed against Mordecai and all the Jews he represented, and he persuaded the king to pass laws with the ultimate goal of eradicating the society of these people.

In other words, he did what leaders, right back to the devil himself, have always tried to do—pass laws to threaten, harm, and marginalize the people of God in their day; to say, "We as a society with our new order are better off without these people."

So what is God's response to this?

■ THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME

The Apostle Paul said in the book of Corinthians that God takes the weak, and the foolish, and the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that stand in their own wisdom and strength (see 1 Corinthians 1:26–28). In this case, God had providentially placed a young Jewish girl named Esther in the king's palace. When God called her to go in and make intercession for her people, it happened to be at the worst possible time in her life. The passion of that first romance with the king had somewhat faded, and she had not even been called into his presence for thirty days. Perhaps she felt unlovely or feared that she had somehow failed to be faithful to the king, and now he was displeased with her.

God has tied the moving of His hand in with our voices.

Don't you love God's timing? As we look at the church in America today, who among us can say that we are all we should be? Our churches are virtually prayerless. Our gospel is light and somewhat treacherous, or if not, it is heavy-fisted, condemning the righteous. Just like Esther, we might conclude, "Oh, God, this is the worst possible time to

experience this onslaught of evil that we are facing today! We are not strong. We feel like we have not been in the presence of the King. We are completely aware of our failings and our inability to do what You are calling us to do.”

Nevertheless, God has tied the moving of His hand in with our voices. You see, the incredible mercy and kindness of God is displayed in that He waits to hear us in our frailty. That means there is one thing that we must rediscover—the thing that Esther had to know despite how she felt about herself: that she was still the bride of the king! No matter how you feel about yourself, even if you have been away from God for years, it does not matter. He has engraved you on the palm of His hands.

It is not a casual prayer that the Lord is looking for in our generation but rather people who are willing to say, “God, I accept whatever You have for my future.”

■ RETURN TO PRAYER

Esther is a type of a praying people—the ones to whom God looks in order to display His power once again. In her own frailty, Esther turned to a complete dependence upon God, calling together her friends to pray and fast for three days. She knew that this would not be accomplished through petition or activism. What needed to be done in the nation was only going to happen by the hand of God, and so she essentially concluded, “Not only will we fast, but I am going to throw myself in with my prayer. I am going to go into the king, and whatever it

costs me, that is what it costs me” (see Esther 4:16). Similarly, it is not a casual prayer that the Lord is looking for in our generation but rather people who are willing to say, “God, I accept whatever You have for my future. Whatever You ask me to do, I will do, and if I perish, I perish.”

Remember, it is not about how you feel about yourself but rather how the King feels about you that matters!

The Scriptures tell us that on the third day of the fast, “*Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace, across from the king’s house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter*” (Esther 5:1–2). Remember, it is not about how you feel about yourself but rather how the king feels about you that matters! You can walk into that court of prayer and feel like a failure, only to discover that the King has been waiting for you! He has been longing to hear your voice. He is not ashamed of you; He bought you with His own blood.

When Esther touched the top of the king’s scepter, she was recognizing his power, his mercy, as well as her position in that court. Likewise, you and I must again recognize the power of our Savior and know that in Him we are more than conquerors.

■ OUR FIRST MINISTRY

“*And the king said to her, ‘What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your*

request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!’” (Esther 5:3).

Esther gave an unusual answer. If it were me, I probably would have just gone for the throat of the matter and explained that Haman was trying to kill my people. But Esther spoke with wisdom. “*If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him*” (Esther 5:4). I find it interesting that Esther is inviting two people but she is intimating the banquet is only for “him.” Assuming it is the king she is referring to, this is a picture of how our first ministry is to Him—the King. Our first ministry is not merely to be coming to Him with our list of needs. We must not forget to take time to just thank Him and love Him.

Now a time of a second request comes—a second banquet. At the banquet, the king said to Esther, “*‘What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!’ Then Esther answered and said, ‘My petition and request is this: If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them’*” (Esther 5:6–8).

Remember, the first banquet was for him, and now the second banquet is for the two of them. This is just like the scripture that says, “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love” (Song of Solomon 2:4). Finally Esther fully knew that the king’s heart was engaged with her voice. She understood that their relationship was not going back to where it used to be, but it was going deeper than it ever had been.

In the beginning of her relationship with the king, it was a love relationship. I have no doubt

that he was enamored with her and vice versa, just as is often the case in our first love relationship with Christ. Yet over time, a distance came. The king was looking for something more: somebody who would rule and reign with him. He wanted somebody with whom he could trust certain things of the kingdom, for we know at the end of the story, Esther was given the power to rewrite the law of death into a law of life. She literally became a co-regent, writing laws with her husband.

Can you understand how much Jesus is waiting and longing for us?

“On the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, ‘What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done.’” (Esther 7:2). You can see a deep longing in the king’s heart. In the same way, can you understand how much Jesus is waiting and longing for us? He is waiting for us as His people to come back into His presence to love Him and recognize our calling on earth.

■ WHO WOULD DARE?

“Then Queen Esther answered and said, ‘If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.’ So King Ahasuerus answered

and said to Queen Esther, ‘Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?’” (Esther 7:3–5).

“Who would dare?” A fire comes into the king’s eyes because his bride has come back! His bride is ministering to him at the banqueting table—the one David said God prepares for us even in the midst of our enemies (see Psalm 23:5). Can you imagine what will happen when we come back to the throne of God in America? “Who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing? Who would dare to think that he can curse and eradicate the people I have proclaimed to be blessed in the earth and be a blessing everywhere they go? Who would dare to raise his hand against My Bride—the testimony of who I am in the earth?”

You are not just a sideline player in a society that is plunging into darkness. You are the Bride of the King!

“Esther said, ‘The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.’ So Haman was terrified before the king and queen. Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then

the king said, ‘Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?’”

“As the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, ‘Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king’s behalf, is standing at the house of Haman.’ Then the king said, ‘Hang him on it!’ So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s wrath subsided” (Esther 7:6–10). Whatever the enemy means for harm to the people of God, God will turn around!

Just as Esther discovered, you have more power than you realize. You are not just a sideline player in a society that is plunging into darkness. You are the Bride of the King—the ultimate authority! Rulers are in His hand; laws are in His power and can be rewritten. We are living in a day when there are textbooks that need to be rewritten in our schools, laws that need to be rewritten in our towns. There are things happening in the spiritual realm that God will give you the power to rewrite. If we all start rewriting together, can you imagine what will happen in all facets of society? We can live to see a spiritual awakening in our day! And so it is time for you to pray for your home. It is time for us to lift up our nation before God. It is time to invite the devil to dinner!

Carter Conlon
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SUMMIT STUDENTS IN COLOMBIA

One of the beautiful things about being the Bible school of Times Square Church is the variety of wonderful missions that are available to our students and alumni. TSC has anchor projects and ministry partners all over the world. Summit students regularly take advantage of short-term volunteer and mission trip opportunities, and several of our alumni have gone on to internships or full-time job placements with TSC ministry partners.

In July, two of Summit’s alumni will be traveling to Medellin, Colombia to work with Ciudad Refugio—a TSC anchor project that includes a rehabilitation and discipleship program for men

and women, a ChildCry feeding program, a shelter for homeless men, a micro-enterprise program, and a vibrant inner-city church.

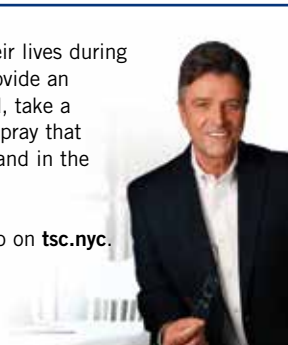
We cherish the relationship we have with our alumni and cannot wait to see what God will do through their lives in Colombia. We love seeing pictures posted on social media of them smiling as they are surrounded by children, helping in a local micro-enterprise bakery, working on a chicken farm, the list goes on!

Pray with us as the next generation of Summit alumni spend the summer traveling and discovering what it means to “live for the benefit of others.”



I am so proud of our Summit students and the transformation that happens in their lives during their time at our Bible school. Many of them are feeling a call to missions and provide an incredible source of help and support to ministries all over the world. If you would, take a moment right now while you are reading this to pause and pray for Summit. Let’s pray that God does something supernatural the lives of our students and recent graduates, and in the lives of those they encounter this summer.

To learn more about TSC’s anchor project in Colombia, click on the “Missions” tab on tsc.nyc. To find out how to apply to Summit, visit summitpa.org — **Pastor Carter Conlon**



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 7:30PM | 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.

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