

Dear Friend,

My newest book, *It's Time to Pray*, was just released and you can get it at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other book outlets, or at Times Square Church. In the book I chronicle my own journey of faith from the early years until today, including the victories, failures, struggles—and the overriding faithfulness of God.

I want you to read it. This book was written so that your faith might be encouraged, no matter where you presently are on your journey. This generation sits in darkness, desperately waiting for a praying people who know how to lay hold of the power of God on their behalf once again. Remember, in times of crisis the pattern of the Lord has always been to reach out through the weak to show His strength to a captivated people once more.

This generation needs you. It needs your prayers. It craves your obedience to the will of God. Spiritual revival happens through people just like you, so don't count yourself out! Every lost child, addicted person, broken marriage, confused teenager and individual on the edge of despair is now counting on you. Let your voice be heard on their behalf at the throne of God today! It's time to pray.

With you at the throne,

Pastor Carter Conlon

IS THIS YOUR FIRST OR YOUR LAST YEAR?

by Carter Conlon

"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish'" (Luke 13:1–5).

If your place of worship is merely a place of comfort that you have built for yourself, it will not protect you in the coming days.

In this passage, Jesus was speaking a word of warning to His disciples as well as to those who were gathered around to hear Him. He first spoke of the Galileans, whose blood was mingled with their sacrifices. These people were in a place where they were offering some kind of religious observance, yet a sudden violence came upon them. Jesus then referred to others who were killed when a tower in

Siloam fell. In a besieged city of that time, people would go up into the tower and close the doors, hoping that what they had built as a place of personal safety would protect them.

In other words, sudden judgment had come upon all the people Jesus mentioned, and what they believed to be a place of safety was proven to be insufficient. However, Jesus went on to say that these people were not more evil than the rest of their society. He warned His listeners to repent, essentially saying, "If your place of worship is not true—if it is merely a place of comfort that you have built for yourself in your own heart—it will not protect you in the coming days."

On the same theme, Jesus continued with this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down'" (Luke 13:6–9). In other words, the owner of the vineyard said, "For three years, I have come searching for fruit—that which can only be borne through a genuine

conversion by the Spirit of God—yet I have found none. Instead, you have crafted a tower of protection in your own mind. You are still doing what you used to do and covering it up with religion!”

Our lives must bear fruit that can come only from the indwelling presence of God.

■ **LEARNING TO HATE SIN**

We, too, would be wise to heed the lesson of this parable. Our lives must bear fruit that can come only from the indwelling presence of God. It cannot come through human sacrifice or feigned religious observance, nor does it come by crafting a place of safety in our own minds. Rather, it requires a deliberate turning away from what the Word of God says is wrong to what He says is right—and trusting God for the strength to perform it. That means we must begin to see sin in our lives the way God sees it; we must hate what God hates.

According to the Word of God, *“These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren”* (Proverbs 6:16–19). We must learn to hate the sowing of dissension and discord among brothers and sisters in Christ. And we must learn to hate the racism of our day. Remember, the Bible says elsewhere, *“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him”* (1 John 3:15). You can try to justify it any way you want, but if you become part of this present divided society that is full of hatred and finger-pointing, the Bible

clearly says you have no eternal life living within you.

Now once we learn to hate sin, we must also come to the point where we are convinced that we cannot save or change ourselves. You and I cannot do good for any length of time because we are so bent on corruption inside these earthen vessels. We must recognize, as Paul did, that “in me dwells no good thing” (see Romans 7:18). He also understood, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer who I live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20). Though we deserved to die, Jesus took our place and bore our sins on that cross!

■ **SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD**

Paul said it this way in the book of Romans: *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtor—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”* (Romans 8:9–14)

In the context of how it was spoken, becoming a son or daughter of God means that by the Spirit, we are led to put to death the deeds of the body. That is how you know you are truly a child of God. The Holy Spirit is moving you from the old way of

living into the way that God has ordained for your life.

Paul continued, “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*” (Romans 8:15–16). In other words, there is an inner knowledge that we belong to God; an inner desire to move away from what hinders toward what will glorify Christ. Sure, we make mistakes, but there is a covering for those moments of frailty. Ultimately, there is that cry that comes back into the heart—“Father, Father.” We want to keep moving closer and closer toward God. We are not interested in building a false altar or tower of our own protection. We desire the life, fruit, and protection of God.

I am concerned about those who come to the house of God and merely want to hear all the promises of God, bypassing “holy” to get to “happy.”

■ **IF IT BEARS FRUIT**

Returning to the parable Jesus told, notice that the keeper of the vineyard said, *“Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it”* (Luke 13:8). In other words, “Please, have mercy. I will do my best to dig around that tree and get down to the roots from where it draws its life source. I will not only expose its roots, but I will put something there to encourage it to grow and bear fruit.”

Like the keeper of the vineyard, I often find myself pleading for mercy for many in the Body of Christ in our generation. I am concerned

about those who come to the house of God and merely want to hear all the promises of God, bypassing “holy” to get to “happy.” Their lives are not bearing fruit. They have settled for a sacrifice that will not protect—a tower that will not keep them in the days ahead.

Of course, my intention is not simply to expose sin and cause people to admit, “God, You got me. I’m a total fraud. I am charting my own course and creating my own system of truth. I have been building a tower that I believed would protect me, yet suddenly it has all come crashing down.” If all I did was expose why it is such a fruitless tree, there would remain only a sense of hopelessness. You see, not only do the roots need to be exposed, they need to be “fertilized” with the ability that God gives to grow. Therefore, my desire is to offer the full counsel of God. I want to put everything around the roots necessary for each life to grow and begin to produce fruit that can come only with the help of God.

***One year from now,
are you willing to have
somebody else sitting
in your seat in church?***

■ ONE YEAR FROM TODAY

Remember that the owner of the vineyard said, “*And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down*” (Luke 13:9).

Here is my question to you today: One year from now, are you willing to have somebody else sitting in your seat in church? Understand, there comes a point when it is no

longer your choice—a point when God says, “I am sorry. This person cannot be reached anymore,” and you come out from under conviction. The joy of the Lord escapes you, and thoughts come into your mind to simply dive wholeheartedly into your own pursuit, whatever that may be. Eventually you vacate your seat in church, and somebody else fills it.

***Let this be the
beginning of a
new journey—of
letting God go after
everything in your
life that is hindering
His presence.***

What a sobering thought! Is this your first or last year? This could either be your last year of sitting in the house of God—where over the next twelve months you get spiritually dull and bored—or it could be the first year of coming under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and entering into the fullness of what God has for your life. You might be so transformed a year from now that you will be telling everybody in your neighborhood what God has done. Your family, coworkers, and everyone else around you will see the change in your life.

Of course, there must be a determination in your heart that says, “Nobody is taking my place. I am not going to build a false tower and yield what God intended to do through my life.” I encourage you to let this be your first year. Let this be the beginning of a new journey—of letting God go after everything in your life that is hindering His

presence. Then allow Him to put in all the promises and provision necessary to cause your life to bear fruit for His glory!

Carter Conlon
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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SUMMIT!

The students have had a very busy but rewarding time here this season. We had a remarkable outreach in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, when our students went out to witness on the streets in the center of the city. They had such compassion and freedom when sharing the gospel. Classes, papers and outreaches have also kept them learning and growing in their faith.

There has been significant spiritual advancement as well. During our annual “Day of Waiting”—a chapel time when we wait on the Lord without an agenda—many students were set free from memories and experiences that hindered them. When we ministered at Times Square Church in early November, it was evident that students had been touched by God.

We continue to sense the presence and peace of God on our campus. As we turn our thoughts to the holidays (and are amazed at how quickly they have come!) we thank you in advance for your continued prayers and support of our students.

And so, from your friends at Summit, we want to wish you a very warm and joyous Christmas season! May the Lord’s favor be on you this coming year and may He continue to bless us here at Summit in 2019.

With love and gratefulness,

Pastor Teresa Conlon
President



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