

LETTER FROM CARTER CONLON

Dear Friend,

Very soon there will be a video posted on the tscnyc.org website entitled: "For the Glory of God and the Souls of Men." It contains an overview of all the international outreaches undertaken by this church during the last several years. It begins with the heart of God for the poor being infused by Pastor David Wilkerson into the very fabric of this congregation, and ends with Prayer in the Square 2009, here in New York City.

Please take the time to watch the entire half hour. I believe your heart will be gladdened and your faith rekindled. If you haven't already done so, take time to consider going on one of our numerous domestic and international outreaches. Teams are leaving for short-term missions almost every week. It would be great to have you along!

I hope you enjoy this month's accompanying message.

Yours in Christ,



Carter Conlon
Senior Pastor

A PERFECT HEART AND A WILLING MIND

by Carter Conlon

The following verses are very precious to me. Within them are some great words of encouragement, as well as words of caution. I believe they speak something profound that could make the difference between success and failure in the Kingdom of God—determining whether we get to the end with a shout of glory or a sigh of regret.

"And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it" (1 Chronicles 28:6–10).

These words of King David recount a conversation he had with the Lord about his son Solomon. Solomon

was set apart at a young age, appointed of God to a specific work and given sound spiritual instruction. *"Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit..." (1 Chronicles 28:11–12).*

***Don't ever
believe the lie of
the devil that you
can't become
what God has
called you to be.***

If you are born again of the Spirit of God, you too are set apart and appointed to a specific work that will glorify God's name in the earth. You have every advantage that Solomon had—you have the Word of God and understand the ways of God. Nothing is hidden from any seeking heart. Nobody can get to the end of this journey and say, "I didn't know; it wasn't clear!" If we didn't know, it was because we shut our minds to what God was speaking.

Solomon knew what he had been called to do. His father had told him, *"Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do*

it” (v. 10). Similarly, you and I know the calling we have been given—to be the temple of the living God in our generation. The Lord no longer dwells in temples made with physical hands, He lives in us! We are to be a testimony of the reality, the mercy and the power of God.

We meet together to worship as a church body, but individually we are to be so alive in Christ that it becomes a living testimony to those living in darkness.

■ ALL THE PROVISION WE NEED

Solomon was given all the provision he needed to fulfill his calling. Verses 14 through 18 list all the things that David his father had provided for building the temple. The same holds true for us today. Our heavenly Father has supplied us with all the provision we need—there is nothing hindering, nothing lacking. Don’t ever believe the lie of the devil that you can’t become what God has called you to be. In Christ you have the full resource of the Godhead. Whatever He has spoken to you will happen, and whatever He has called you to be, you will be. Not by your might or power, but by the Holy Spirit living inside of you.

In addition to all of this, Solomon was not alone! *“And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God: and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment”* (1 Chronicles 28:21). We, too, are not alone—we are part of a body. Corporately we make up the house of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ is alive in each of us. We can come together, encourage one another, and realize that God’s work moves forward as all of us fulfill our part in the testimony He has given us as His witnesses on earth.

In verse 8, David tells Solomon that if he fully fulfills his calling, he will leave a complete and strong inheritance for those to follow. *“Now therefore...keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you forever.”* Unfortunately, however, Solomon left a divided kingdom and a weakened son. He set the stage for the spiritual decline of Israel and the eventual overpowering by its enemies.

The Assyrians swallowed the North of Israel, and the South was eventually taken captive into Babylon. This is evidence that a nation doesn’t go into captivity before the church. The church goes into captivity first, and then the nation follows. How tragic it would be for the Church today to leave a weak inheritance—with people emaciated and wondering where God is and how to find Him.

Many people today come into the house of God with a focus on how much they can accumulate.

■ THE KEY TO FINISHING WELL

“And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever” (1 Chronicles 28:9). Solomon really had no excuse for leaving a weak inheritance, for he had been told precisely what was necessary to finish his course well: a perfect heart and a willing mind.

Remember that at the beginning of his ministry, the Lord appeared to Solomon and said, *“...Ask what I shall give thee”* (2 Chronicles 1:7). He could have asked for anything. Yet Solomon’s response to God was evidence that he had not been listening carefully to what his father had told him. If only he had gone back for a moment and rethought some things. But he replied, *“I want wisdom and knowledge so I can come in and go out and judge the people.”* In other words, *“I want giftings.”* It’s like the type of person who says to God, *“I would like discernment, I would like miracles, I would like compassion.”* They are all good things in themselves, but it is like asking for the tools to do the job without the heart to do it. Solomon could have said, *“Lord, I want a perfect heart and a willing mind as David my father has told me I need. And I would like wisdom and knowledge, also.”* And God would have given it all to him!

In John 16:23, Jesus said, *“...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”* Realistically, we are in the same place Solomon was in. *“Ask! Ask what it is that you want, and I will give it to you.”* Incredible! Yet, many people today come into the house of God with a focus on how much they can accumulate—words, abilities, gifting. There is more Hebrew and Greek studied today than perhaps in any other generation. More tapes, more conferences, more knowledge—but people are moving farther away from the heart and mind of God every hour. So many of God’s people are gathering and learning, yet remain of little or no influence in a society descending into ever-deepening darkness. Paul described the condition of the church in the last days as always learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. In other words, never being brought to the place where all that knowledge is supposed to lead.

■ A GLORIOUS BEGINNING

Think back for a moment to the dedication of the temple in 2 Chronicles 7. The glory of God so filled the house that the priests could not even stand to minister. The goodness and mercy of God was revealed, the people sang, and the trumpets sounded. Do you remember the day you first found Christ and the glory filled your physical temple? Remember when you first understood that you didn't stand by works or merit, but that it was all by God's grace? Nobody had to crank up the band to get you to sing, for there was a shout in your soul!

There was even a great sacrifice at the temple dedication. Solomon himself offered up 120,000 sheep to the Lord. Similarly, there was great sacrifice in those beginning years when you came to Christ. Remember the days when it didn't matter how far you had to drive or how long the prayer meeting was? You wanted to be where God was and do all He called you to do.

Picture Solomon as he knelt before God upon the five-by-five foot bronze platform he built, with all the people gathered around. He spread out his hands toward heaven and prayed a prayer that literally brought down the presence of God. He prayed for God to respond to the prayers of all people who came into that temple. He asked Him to bring fresh rain in the times of drought, new provision in the times of famine, and an answer to the cry of every stranger who came in looking for hope. He prayed that every enemy rising against the people of God would be defeated, and that new strength would be given for every battle. If God's people made mistakes and tragically found themselves in the enemy's camp, Solomon requested that as they came and faced the temple, God would grant them freedom from their old captivities, carelessness and sin. Indeed, there was great wisdom in his prayer. Solomon seemed to understand that he was appealing to a God who was

willing to supply new provision, new strength, and even new mercies for those captivated by old sin.

■ SOLOMON'S END

However, by the time Solomon got to the end of his days, he had become disheartened. He completely lost sight of what the temple was to be and all of the newness found in God. In the book of Ecclesiastes, we see where Solomon ended up theologically as he asks, *"Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new?"* (Ecclesiastes 1:10) How he lost sight of what God wanted to miraculously do!

In chapter 2 he said, *"For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil"* (Ecclesiastes 2:21). Solomon considered it a great evil to labor for the benefit of those who had not worked for it themselves. Can you imagine any church that embraces this kind of theology? Don't we pray so that God might be glorified by releasing into the freedom of Christ other people who have not worked for it? Is it not all by the grace and goodness of God? What Solomon began to embrace was so far from the heart of God.

"So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive" (Ecclesiastes 4:1-2). They had no comforter! But that was what the temple was supposed to be about! It was to be a place of comfort for the oppressed, the hungry, the thirsty and the captive. Yet Solomon neglected the fact that there was One who was willing to lift all of the burdens and oppression.

■ WARNING SIGNS

What happened to Solomon to bring him to this point? There are a lot of theories, and I am going to add mine to the mix. Quite simply, I believe Solomon got bored with the work of God. He had been given charge of the presence of God in the earth and the house where He dwelt. But he was also given giftings and a brilliant mind. And so he got bored. One of the first signs that something is wrong would be if you are in church with hundreds of people coming to the saving knowledge of Christ at the altar, and you are looking at your watch, wondering if you are going to be the first to get out of the parking area.

Yet quite often this is the dilemma of those given giftings as they walk with God. Solomon got bored, and Scripture tells us that at the end of twenty years—after he had built his house and the Lord's house—he began to build other houses, vineyards, and terraces. Then he planted gardens and raised farm animals. He just began to move as he pleased because he had this creative ability in him. Yet he didn't realize it was leading him farther and farther away from what he had been called to be.

■ THE SIMPLICITY OF GOD'S WORK

If you ever find yourself getting bored with the things of God, just stop. Stop everything and go back into the prayer closet. Ask one more time, "God Almighty, please help me. Give me a perfect heart and a willing mind, so that no matter how you have gifted me or what you have put into my life, it will be sufficient. Don't let me get bored!"

Have you ever really considered that we are not called to be any more than what God has asked us to be? Our cry must be for a heart to embrace God's work; for a mind willing to accept and occupy the place He has given us in His

body. The pathway He has laid for our lives must be sufficient for us—no Plan B, C or D necessary! That’s what it means to have a perfect heart and a willing mind. Position, influence, pastoring, preaching—it really doesn’t matter. Without the heart for truth or the mind to be taken where truth leads, we run the great risk of becoming as theologically dark as Solomon ended. Unfortunately, there are many churches in the world today where the people and even the pastors are bored to death. They drift into foolishness because they are bored with the simplicity of the work of God in Christ. That’s why Paul said, *“But I fear, lest by any means...your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”* (2 Corinthians 11:3). They turn from the simple focus of the work of God, the redemption of lost humanity, because it is no longer sufficient for them.

In fact, this was the original sin—it’s what happened to Adam and Eve. The devil came and said, “Is this what life is about? Here you are looking after this garden, meeting with God periodically. Did God give you a mind just so you could trim plants and name animals? Do you not think life has more than this?” And they bit into that fruit, believing the lie that what God made them to be was insufficient, and that what He had given them to do fell short of their capability. “There must be more! My life must be destined for more than what God has given me to do!” When they bit into the fruit, look at the inheritance that was left. Think about yourself when you were in sin and despair—that was the inheritance Adam and Eve left when they bit into the lie.

The cry of my heart is that we never stray from the simplicity of the work of God in this temple, individually and collectively. I pray we never get to the point where we get bored with the work of God and start looking for something else to build. Or where we lose that singular focus and suddenly people are coming to Christ and we are no longer rejoicing. If one person responds and receives Christ, we should be dancing all over the place! If we are truly one in heart with God and one in mind with Christ, we will find ourselves among the angels rejoicing.

■ ANOTHER CHANCE

Maybe you feel that you have fallen short. You may say, “Lord, I really don’t have a right heart, and some of the things that Solomon eventually believed—I see the beginnings of them in my own heart.” Don’t be discouraged, for the beauty of this whole story is that God came more than one time to Solomon, and God will come more than one time to you. No matter where you are, or what you have done with what He gave you, He comes to you again today and says, “Ask of me what you will!”

God is not concerned about what kind of mess you have made, or how deeply you have blown your testimony. He can make all things new. So ask of Him! Ask for a perfect heart and a willing mind, and expect Him to bring you through to the end with a shout of glory!

Carter Conlon
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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	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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