

LETTER FROM CARTER CONLON

Dear Friend,

So many people are being tempted to give in to fear in these troubled times. Indeed, those without a truthful and living relationship with Jesus Christ will tremble along with those whose hearts are failing them as things progressively go from bad to worse.

Times will eventually degenerate to the point that, as Scripture says in Hebrews 12:27, everything that can be shaken, will be shaken, and only that which cannot be shaken will stand. Scripture, however, tells us conclusively from beginning to end that those who place their total trust in the Word of our God will find shelter in the one who cannot and will not fail those who have placed their confidence in Him.

It will be glorious to be a part of the overcoming church in the final days of time as we know it. Take to heart the words of Jesus: *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

Yours in Christ,



Carter Conlon
Senior Pastor

FEAR NOT, NEITHER BE DISMAYED

by Carter Conlon

“And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed” (Deuteronomy 31:7–8).

Fear and dismay! The devil will always come against the children of God with these two weapons. But if we recognize them for what they are and understand that God has given us a remedy to defeat them, they will never take us down.

By definition, fear is anticipation that we may suffer harm or that things might go wrong. Dismay is discouragement. Fear comes when we are opposed by something of strength superior to our own. Dismay comes when we consider our own resources. We look inside ourselves and come to the conclusion that we are not strong enough to fight the battle that is before us. That is how the two work together. Fear is an opposing force coming against us, causing us to tremble just for a moment, and dismay comes when we realize that we are not strong enough to fight this force.

Perhaps you are fighting a besetting sin that you believed you could defeat in your own strength. You

thought that going to church, listening to some messages, and a little Bible reading was good enough. But suddenly you find yourself in a battle that is much stronger than you and try as you will, you cannot defeat it. Soon it produces dismay in your heart, and you don't know how you will ever get through. But take courage, for it happens to everybody from time to time. Despondency can even settle on the hearts of pastors in pulpits, who may be preaching faith but fighting an inner despair.

■ OPPOSITION TO OUR INHERITANCE

Did you know that you have an incredible inheritance in Christ? Freedom, victory, peace of mind, strength, soundness of heart—all these things are set before you to possess, just as the children of Israel had an incredible Promised Land set before them. When they sent in the twelve spies, they returned with the report that the land was everything God said it was. Despite this assurance, however, all but two of the spies focused on the giants in the land, concluding, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” That's fear. It's how the devil always operates. There is always this roar of the enemy against everything that God has ever promised you. Even though there were the two other voices, Joshua and Caleb, the children of Israel

gave in to the louder voices. Not the voice of truth, not the voice speaking for God, but the one in their hearts and ears that was louder at that moment.

Numbers 14:1 says, “*All the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.*” Fear had given way to dismay. The giants were there, they didn’t have the resources to fight, and they concluded that they were destined for defeat. So all night they cried. Perhaps you have found yourself in a similar situation—crying at night, waking up brokenhearted, and wondering how you will get out of your battle. You thought if you tried hard enough, you would get the victory. But suddenly, you begin to realize that the more you try, the louder the voices that oppose you.

There are seasons in the Christian life when what used to satisfy no longer does.

■ A COMMON STRUGGLE

“*For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears*” (2 Corinthians 7:5). Paul speaks here of battles and struggles, things coming against them and things inside of them. But he also writes in 1 Corinthians 10:13: “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.*” The devil will try to convince you that you are the only one fighting this battle—that everyone lives in victory except you.

But Paul says the temptation that is taking you is common to man.

Everyone has sudden fear that will try to grip his heart and mind. We all have times and seasons when we look inside ourselves and become dismayed at how little of the strength and character of God we find. “*...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear it*” (1 Corinthians 10:13). God is faithful—He will not allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to bear. With the temptation, He will always make a way of escape. How did God bring Paul and his companions through in Macedonia? In 2 Corinthians 7:5–6, it was by the arrival of a man with a good report and a comforting word. Paul starts out saying, “*...flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.*” In your struggle, God’s way of escape is not going to be by zapping you at an altar somewhere. It will be by a word. He will speak to you about your situation with good words that will bring comfort and cheer.

■ GO DEEPER WITH GOD

Remember that Joshua was sent to accomplish a humanly impossible task. There was a land of promise that had been set apart for the people of God. Joshua and the people were to go in and conquer everything that would try to keep them from obtaining what was rightfully theirs. Similarly, the life of Christ and victory in every area is set apart as ours. We can see the promises before us in the Word of God, but we soon discover it is impossible for us to obtain these in our natural ability.

The Bible shows us some key elements that are required before we are able to go in and possess this place of promise. “*And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old*

corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year” (Joshua 5:10–12).

Either they conquered the land or they starved to death—there was nothing in the middle.

The people ate of the old corn of the land and then manna they had faithfully received for many years suddenly stopped. Similarly, there are seasons in the Christian life when what used to satisfy no longer does. Perhaps you were once quite satisfied with going to church, reading your Bible a little, and memorizing a few Scriptures. Perhaps you thought, “It just doesn’t get any better than this!” But suddenly the Bible goes dry, the worship songs are not doing it anymore, and there’s a troubling in your spirit. It’s like the old corn is gone, and the manna that used to sustain you, your small scoop from the Bible, no longer suffices.

At this point, you must consider that God might be leading you into something deeper than you have ever known. He often has to dry up the well and cause the manna to cease in order to get us to move from a certain place, lest we become comfortable and camp there. It might be a shallow place, an experience in God that isn’t deep enough to take us into the fullness of our inheritance. Quite often the Lord’s methods to get us to move forward are not

pleasant. He creates a hunger, and suddenly we are in the middle of a fierce battle. We thought that our few minutes in the Scriptures were good enough, but we realize we cannot win the victory if our relationship with God remains shallow.

■ CONQUER OR STARVE

When the manna ceased, the people had to move in to possess the Promised Land. Either they conquered the land or they starved to death—there was nothing in the middle. If you find yourself in that place today, thank God for it. It is here that the Lord will speak very simply to your heart.

In Isaiah 43:18–20, the Lord says to His people, *“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honor me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.”* Essentially He is saying, *“What I am about to do in your life will bless many around you. I am going to give you drink in a dry land, where others are starving to death.”*

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Once you understand that you are going through this battle because God is leading you into something new of Himself, fear and dismay will melt away. He will bring you to a new strength, a new supply, a new

relationship, a new confidence in His promises and power. He has not failed you, and you are not the worst sinner on the face of the earth. Put away the lies of the devil. You are right where God wants you to be—in the hand of the Father—and nobody can take you out of the Father’s hand!

“This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise” (Isaiah 43:21). God has redeemed you, and He is going to bring you through by divine deliverance, not human effort. Your song of praise will be about Jesus, not about yourself.

■ AGREE WITH YOUR ADVERSARY

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” (Joshua 5:13). Almost every scholar agrees that this is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. But he comes as a man with a sword drawn in his hand, leaving Joshua unable to determine if he is for them or against them. His sword is drawn, but his countenance says, *“This far and no farther.”*

Jesus said it this way in Matthew 5:25, *“Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou are in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.”* At certain times in your walk with God, He will become your adversary—not for evil, but for good. He knows that flesh cannot occupy the land of promise or take the glory for what is about to happen, so He will stand and tell you that this is where you stop. This is where you stop relying on yourself, where you drop your plans, and where self-image is thrown to the wind. You will not win this battle in your own strength. Jesus said you must agree

with your adversary when you are in this situation—especially if it’s God.

***Take off human
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■ TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES

“And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so” (Joshua 5:14–15).

Jesus stood before Joshua saying, *“Loose your shoe from off your foot.”* In other words, *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”* (Zechariah 4:6). God is telling him, *“I don’t need your power, I don’t need your might, and I don’t want your strategies. Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground—a sacred place where God alone is to be glorified!”* Take off human effort and begin to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Give God the glory when He opens the door, and go through it in His strength!

■ EXAMINE YOUR RESOURCES

Jesus said in Luke 14:31–32, *“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.”* Without Christ and His power, you will make peace with your enemies and allow them to stay in the place that is rightfully yours. You have been given the

victory in Christ, and every promise in the Word is yours, but you must be willing to ask yourself, "Do I have the power to come against an enemy that is much stronger than I?" And you must come to the conclusion that you do not have the ability in your own strength.

He goes on to say in verse 33, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." In other words, "If you don't forsake all you have—all your own efforts, strength, plans—then you can't follow me where I am going." You cannot, because it is a spiritual kingdom with spiritual battles. It requires a strength that is deeper and more powerful than anything you will ever have on your own. The sooner you get to the point of knowing you are nothing, the better off you are; nothing in yourself, but everything to the heart of God.

When fear and dismay overtake you, you need to follow God's instructions to Joshua.

■ A COMING SHOUT

The Scripture says that Joshua fell on his face and worshiped God. There must have been such gratitude in his heart! He no longer had to figure out how to take down a powerful city with only pitchforks and sticks. He was so thankful God had finally showed up in the situation. I hope that's how

you feel today, especially if you feel weak. God chooses the weakest to glorify His name, to show that it's not anything of us, it's all about Him.

I believe God is going to have a church in this generation that stands in His strength and victory. Like the Israelites at Jericho, they will know how to keep quiet. They will not need to call anybody on the phone during their crisis. When fear and dismay overtake you, you need to follow God's instructions to Joshua: "Be quiet and just do what I tell you to do. Walk around and let confidence build in your heart. Be still and know that I am God." And when the time comes, the Lord is going to put it in your heart to shout! What a shout that must have been on the seventh day when the Israelites knew it was God who had supernaturally brought down the walls. Victory was not gained in their own strength or their military plan, but simply by trusting God!

It's time to take off your shoes. It's time to get rid of your efforts and simply come to God in faith. All the promises of God belong to you: the new life, the new mind, the new heart. You do not have to be afraid of any voice; you do not have to fear or be dismayed, because it is not about you. It's about the Christ in you. Hallelujah!

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

| | | | |
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| 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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