

LETTER FROM TREG MCCOY

Dear friend,

November is an exciting time for TSC Missions, signaling the release of the 2011 short-term trip schedule. We are offering over 40 trips with destinations from Alabama to Mongolia, all responding to the highest calling of God in the earth—to go to people who have no helper and help them.

i-61 Teams inspired by the words in Isaiah 61, these teams participate in evangelistic outreaches to the poor and brokenhearted.

OnCall: Medicine with a Mission trips bring together medical/dental professionals with non-medical volunteers, to provide free medical care to those who need it most.

BrickThink construction trips for skilled and unskilled volunteers who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty serving those in need.

ChildCry teams will work with one of our feeding programs in food preparation and distribution.

We invite you to go with us on one of our short-term missions trips. Online registration begins November 17, 2010 at tscnyc.org/missions.

If you are a pastor or missions ministry leader and would like to learn more, please contact us at missions@timessquarechurch.org.

Now is the time!

Treg McCoy
Missions Director

BEWARE OF SMITING THE ROCK

by Carter Conlon

"Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode [contended] with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!

And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him.

And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Numbers 20:1-12).

Paul said that all these things happened to the children of Israel as examples for us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Therefore, there must be an illustration, a warning within these verses of Scripture that we would do well to heed.

At the beginning of the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, the people of God were to inherit the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. They were about to go in and possess a land that would abound but they were in a deplorable spiritual condition, full of unbelief and fighting with their leadership. There was no evidence of the blessing of God as far as they could see, and they declared that God had brought them into a place that appeared fruitless. And then, to top it off, they claimed to be dying of thirst!

■ WHY SO SEVERE A JUDGMENT?

Now consider all that Moses had endured with these people throughout the forty years in the wilderness—yet how faithful he remained. What was it about this action of smiting the rock that deserved so severe a judgment? We know he hit it in anger, but he had displayed anger before. When he came down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments in his hand and saw the people dancing around a golden calf, he took those tablets—which were the Word of God—and smashed them to pieces. Why had he not been judged for that? Why would God wait so long to judge him for a flash of temper?

And let's also consider Aaron, who would die because of this. *“Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there”* (Numbers 20:24, 26). Aaron was the one who had fashioned the golden calf while Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments. He even built an altar and worshiped the calf with the people. If he had to die for something, surely it should have been that!

In Deuteronomy 3:25, Moses recounted to the people his further appeals to the Lord. *“I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.”* Remember, it was Moses who previously stood between the wrath of God and a sinning people when the Lord told him, *“Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they”* (see Deuteronomy 9:14). Yet as Moses stood in the breach, the Lord relented. Now he was coming to God on behalf of his own transgression,

only to be told, *“Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter”* (Deuteronomy 3:26). In other words, God said to Moses, *“This is the way it is going to be, so don't talk to Me about it anymore. You are not going into the Promised Land.”*

Why was this such an offense to God? And what does it speak to us today? In order for us to understand the severity of God's action in this case, we need to see that this whole journey was a clear foreshadowing of a soon-coming Christ and His Church.

***I observe people
coming back for
salvation every
time they fail.
They don't
realize that
when they first
came to Christ,
their sins were
dealt with.***

■ A FORESHADOWING

The plan of God from the beginning of time was to send His Son to die on a cross for a people who had sinned against Him and to regather to Himself a bride called His Church—you and me. *“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink”* (Exodus 17:6). This was a clear foreshadowing of Jesus at Calvary. The rock was smitten, just as Jesus was smitten on His way to the cross. *“...they struck him on the face”* (Luke 22:64). *“...one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand...”* (John 18:22). *“...they smote him with their hand...”* (John 19:3). *“And they smote him on the head”* (Mark 15:19).

Just as water poured forth from the rock when Moses struck it, John 19:34 says, *“But one of the soldiers with his spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.”* The blood was for redemption, and the water for life. It was a perfect type of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the Father sending the Son, the Son being smitten, and out of that smiting, the Holy Spirit—the living water.

Jesus said, *“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive...)”* (John 7:37–39).

What an incredible picture of the redemption of humanity! This was not just an ordinary rock, an ordinary circumstance, for everything in the Old Testament was leading to Calvary. Viewed in that way, suddenly the Scriptures unlock and you begin to understand that nothing is by chance. It's not happenstance that water poured out of His side, for He was the Rock. Paul said, *“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”* (1 Corinthians 10:4). Notice how it all points to our redemption, to the Church of Jesus Christ, and to an eternal kingdom that is coming. Hallelujah!

■ SMITTEN FOR US

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...” (Isaiah 53:4–5). The word “iniquities” refers to our failings, our suffering, our misery. Jesus was wounded to make a way for us through the veil, into the very presence of a holy God—never again to worry about our eternal destiny, but rather to be fully received as sons and

daughters of God, fully cleansed as His righteousness.

“... *the chastisement of our peace was upon him* [all that separated us from God’s promises, His life, His strength, His victory]; *and with his stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). We are healed! We may not look like it—some days we are an awful-looking mess—but we are healed from the penalty of sin and its power. When Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, He said, “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). The devil’s reign, the weakness of sin, the penalty—it is all finished. The Rock was smitten on Calvary, and as a result the power of God is given to us to become new creations in Christ Jesus.

It is finished! We have a righteousness that is not our own—our perfection is in Christ. We didn’t earn it, we don’t deserve it—it is given to us by faith. If that doesn’t make us shout, nothing will!

■ IT’S TIME TO SPEAK TO THE ROCK

The Lord specifically told Moses, “...*speak ye unto the rock...*” (Numbers 20:8). He wasn’t to strike it for it had already been smitten and now it was time to speak.

“*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*” (John 14:13–14).

“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full*” (John 16:23–24).

The sacrifice was made once, and we don’t have to smite the rock anymore. If you have responded to God’s offer of salvation with a sincere heart—truly intending to walk with Him, turning away from a lifestyle of sin and receiving cleansing of His blood—that

first smiting of the rock was sufficient. The life, the water that came from it, became yours and you never have to return to an altar for salvation.

I observe people coming back for salvation every time they fail. They don’t realize that when they first came to Christ, their sins were dealt with, and they were given a cleanness in Christ. If sins were imputed to those who belong to Jesus, they would be saved at one o’clock, lost at two o’clock, saved at three, lost at four—just hoping that they were on the right side of the clock when their heart finally stopped beating.

***If you are
wondering why
you even bother
to call yourself
a Christian, the
Lord says to you,
“The sacrifice
still applies.”
Your sins are
still forgiven—
you don’t have
to come and be
saved again.***

But that is not the way it works. As a genuine believer in Christ, sin is not imputed to you. Yes, sin can affect your relationship with God, dulling your mind and causing you not to hear His voice. You might even start living in a certain way, but God will never let you go if you are a genuine believer in Him. There will be a conviction in your heart.

■ OFFENDING THE WORK OF GOD

When we ministers fail to lead the true church to the completeness of Christ’s victory in spite of her present

condition, we diminish the finality, the greatness, and the compassion of the cross of Jesus Christ. It was one sacrifice—one time. If I allow people to come to the altar for salvation every week, I offend the work of God. That’s what Moses did. He was exasperated with the people, took that rod, and struck the rock again. Perhaps the dilemma Moses faced was that he just did not believe God could be that merciful. He came to a point where he had had enough and committed a very dangerous, grave offense.

Making people who are saved feel as if their sin is imputed to them is a type of diminishing the cross. God takes this so seriously that He said to Moses, “Don’t talk to me about this again; this is so grievous that you are not going in to the Promised Land” (Deuteronomy 3:26–27, paraphrase). Moses went to heaven, of course, but he missed the Promised Land on earth. That’s how seriously God takes this—how much mercy He wants to show His people. If you are a child of God and have trusted in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, God help me if I make you feel that the blood of that cross does not apply to you and you have to keep coming back to the altar over and over.

I believe there will be a great harvest of souls in these last days with many coming in from camps that have been a mess. The Lord has been speaking to my heart, “Be very careful that you do not condemn the righteous. Just because someone adheres to a practice or holds to a viewpoint you don’t agree with doesn’t mean that I have not received them. Be very careful that you don’t smite the rock and make people who have walked with Me for years feel like their salvation has not been real. Be very careful, for you do not have a right to call common or unclean what I have cleansed.”

■ AN INCREDIBLE INVITATION

“*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast*

our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14–16). We are to come boldly, not only when we are strong, but especially in our time of need.

If you are struggling today, I invite you to talk to God. You have the right to go to Him just as you are...but above all, with a heart that wants Him.

You may be afraid of the future; you may have had a view of what walking with God was supposed to be and it has not materialized for you. If you are wondering why you even bother to call yourself a Christian, the Lord says to you, “The sacrifice still applies. Your sins are still forgiven—you don’t have to come and be saved again. Come and just talk to Me!”

Do you understand this incredible invitation? “If you are thirsty, talk to Me! If you are hungry, talk to Me! If you are fearful, struggling, caught in a besetting sin, talk to Me! Don’t wait until you are strong, come when you are weak. And come boldly, for I have

invited you in. This is not a walk for the strong only, it is for all people—all races, all cultures, whether you are on top of the mountain, or underneath the mountain. Come with confidence—you are My child; you don’t have to hide from Me. I was smitten for you, wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities. All your failures have been laid upon Me, and with My stripes you are healed!”

This is hard for some people to hear. We think it is holy to hang our heads and walk around mournful because of our failings. The prodigal son thought it was holy when he came home with his mantra, “I have sinned, I am not worthy, make me a slave in your house” (Luke 15:18–19, paraphrase). However, the father did not even answer him but instead simply embraced him, put shoes on his feet, struck up the band and exclaimed, “Let’s have a celebration! Finally my son has come home!” Oh, beloved, I see them coming from the north, south, east, west—broken, bruised, confused, beaten up by this world—but still sons and daughters of God.

If you are struggling today, I invite you to talk to God. You have the right to go to Him just as you are—with all your struggles, frailties, feelings of condemnation, the whole deal—but above all, with a heart that wants Him. As you speak to Him about what is on your heart, He promises that water will come out of the rock. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit—cleansing you, strengthening you, giving you faith where you have lost faith. Don’t be afraid to talk to Him. Let Him touch you today. Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon
©2010 Times Square Church

This newsletter is an edited version of “BEWARE OF SMITING THE ROCK,” a sermon given on June 27, 2010 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at tscnyc.org. 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. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.

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.

Founding Pastor

David Wilkerson

Senior Pastor

Carter Conlon

Tel:

212-541-6300

Fax:

212-541-6415

Church Location:

237 West 51st Street
Between Broadway & 8th Avenue

Mailing Address:

1657 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10019

e-mail:

info@timesquarechurch.org

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	

tscnyc.org