

LETTER FROM CARTER CONLON

Dear Friend,

You have no reason to fear the days ahead! Let me tell you why.

The story of Jonah is all about fear. Jonah had deep reservations about the things that God was asking him to do and this fear caused him to flee on a boat bound for Tarshish. A violent storm arose and while Jonah slept, the other sailors began to panic and look for a way to save the ship from capsizing and being demolished. Jonah knew that he had the answer so he said to them, *"Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you"* (Jonah 1:12).

In effect, Jonah was saying, "God has given me the power to bring calm to your storm. He has not called me to hide from your troubles, but to be cast into the midst of them for your comfort."

As the church of Jesus Christ, we are not called to hide in times of trial but to bring the comfort of Christ into the crisis. When Jonah surrendered to God's call upon his life, he received courage not only to face but also to bring change to what had formerly been the deepest fear of his heart.

Take courage, your finest days are just ahead.

Yours, in Christ,



Carter Conlon
Senior Pastor

A WORD FOR THOSE WHO FEEL LIKE QUITTING

by Carter Conlon

If you feel like quitting, this word is for you. Beloved, you are so close to something in God—so close to the victory that your heart has longed for. This is not the time to quit!

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf" (2 Corinthians 1:8–11).

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Paul was saying, "I don't want you to be ignorant of this. We were on a divine commission from the Lord to bring life and liberty to people who needed to know there is a Savior.

When we were involved in this, trouble came against us so suddenly and powerfully that we could not stand against it."

"...pressed out of measure..." (2 Corinthians 1:8) means the opposition was stronger than any resistance they could find within themselves. They didn't know how to handle it, which eventually brought them to a point where dying looked better than living. Have you ever reached that place?

Many people today can probably testify, "When I first came to Christ, I had such optimism. Things around me were changing for the better, and the future appeared to be full of great promise. I was given a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit. But suddenly, without warning, things seemed to grow dark—circumstances changed, and threatening voices from without and within grew so loud that I could hardly hear the promises of God. Now I am afraid to go on. I can hardly see hope ahead of me anymore."

■ SUDDEN OPPOSITION

It is not uncommon to suddenly and inexplicably face violent opposition while serving Christ. However, it is important to remember that in reality, none of it can conquer you, no matter how it looks. It is like walking through a dark alley and being surrounded by vicious junkyard

dogs—yet their chains stop them just short of being able to hurt you.

The only potential power the devil has is when we fall into agreement with his reasoning and embrace his threats.

The devil's whole tactic is to convince you that the evil around you is going to overpower you. However, he really has no power to stop the work of God in your life, for he was defeated on Calvary. His reign, the law of sin and death, and all the power that he had was cancelled on Calvary. There is nothing he can do but stand on the shores and watch the people of God go through the seas of impossibility into every promise given in Christ Jesus. The only potential power the devil has is when we fall into agreement with his reasoning and embrace his threats. "I don't think I will ever change. I don't think I can make it."

In contrast, consider the words of Paul: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31–32). Only someone who has come through everything that we must face today could write such words. Paul had to get to the point of understanding that these things were more powerful than he could ever hope to be. His only recourse was quitting and he finally realized that his only help was in God.

"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are

accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:36–39). I am persuaded! It is easy to be persuaded when you're on the mountaintop, but being persuaded down in the valley is where you find the difference.

■ A SEASON OF MIRACLES

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.... And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul" (Acts 19:5–6, 10–11).

For at least two years in Ephesus, Paul had experienced unimpeded preaching and miracles. People were receiving the Word of God in unprecedented measure and Scripture says that even handkerchiefs were taken from Paul and placed on people who were deathly ill, and they were healed.

"And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious (magical) arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:18–19).

There was no religious deception here—people were honest with God and put away their evil practices. They came to an understanding of the depth of Christ on Calvary—the depth of the forgiveness that was bought there. It was an incredible revival!

I think most of us would have been happy to live during that time—to see the things that Paul and those who ministered with him saw. However, it soon became evident that it was time to move on. "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season" (Acts 19:21–22). After sending Timothy and Erastus on, I believe Paul took just a moment to relax and reflect on all the wonders God had done. Have you ever done that? Have you ever just put your feet up and thought about all the miracles that have happened in your life since you became a Christian? We can picture Paul doing that here—just sitting back for a bit to savor the moment.

Then the next day, all hell broke out! Most commentators agree that this season was what Paul was referring to when he spoke the words of our opening text—"*...pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life...*" (2 Corinthians 1:8). A local silversmith began to stir up the other idol makers whose trade was in danger due to Paul's preaching, and they all became infuriated (their profit margin was being affected). It grew into an uproar in the arena, and the people shouted for two hours straight, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Can you imagine being a Christian in the midst of that cacophony—a roar of voices trying to shout down the Word, claiming that something else is greater than the God that you serve?

But that is the tactic of the devil. He was trying to convince Paul and his associates that there was a power greater than the God they were walking with, the one who

had begun to manifest His glory. This uproar lasted for quite a while, and Paul was in the midst of it. We don't have all the details, we just know that it was violent and that society had suddenly turned. The turning point seemed to have been when their god of gold was touched—their god of income and prosperity. At that time this great revival turned inward and turned against the believers.

Some of you go to a workplace where those around you tolerate the fact that you are a Christian...until it begins to affect their livelihood.

Similarly, you and I are going to experience opposition from a kingdom that is being overthrown by the presence of God in us. We may know victory for a season, but keep in mind that we are standing for God in a world that is against the ways of God—a world filled with people who, in their own ignorance, are opposing their own salvation. Some of you go to a workplace where those around you tolerate the fact that you are a Christian, and some may even be interested in what you say. That is, until it begins to affect their livelihood—because you are walking honestly while they are not. Then suddenly all hell begins to break out around you.

This world will profess tolerance toward us until their sense of well-being comes into question—until they

realize the church is a force in the nation. Then we will find ourselves in the midst of this incredible war, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is Dow Jones of the United States of America! Great are our corporations and our image of ourselves!”

ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD

I don't know what you are facing today or what kind of voice is coming against you, but I do know that you do not have to be overcome by it. You are not walking in a kingdom made by the hands of men but rather fashioned by the hand of God Himself. After the apostles witnessed Jesus feed the multitudes with the loaves and fishes, they got into their boat to cross to the other side. Suddenly a violent storm arose and it seemed the elements themselves were trying to throw off the testimony of what Christ had just done. Why did that storm come? The enemy knows that the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ is something he must oppose with everything he has.

This was not a chance storm in the apostles' day and this same storm will come against every believer today. If you find yourself losing strength in a storm, you are a partaker of what others before you have gone through. Search the Scriptures and you will see that those who walked with God ended up facing all types of opposition. Daniel was thrown into a den of lions and Elijah had to flee from a wicked king. King David, mighty king of Israel, had a great anointing on his life and had won many victories in battle. Yet suddenly he found himself completely alone—the only ones who came near were those who were against him. But he did what you and I need to do in such seasons—he encouraged himself in the Lord.

You must go back in your mind and remember how good God has been to

you. David remembered how God's anointing had come upon him. He remembered victories in his life—fighting the lion and the bear and running into the valley to face Goliath. He also remembered picking up his harp and singing to King Saul, binding the devil so that he was no longer able to torment him. David thought about these things and encouraged himself in the Lord.

David went into the closet of prayer, and God showed him a way through. That is why he could write, “*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*” (Psalms 23:4). God was saying, “I am not going to take you out immediately; I am going to take you through. I am going to show you where strength is.” With his few men, David pursued what was lost, and although the odds were overwhelmingly against him, everything was restored—“*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit...*” (Zechariah 4:6). David concluded, “I will not get through this by reasoning or by figuring a way over or around. I will get through it just the way I started—by the supernatural power of Almighty God.”

How are we going to get through the days ahead? How are we even going to get through the present time?

When you get to the end, you will have a song, but that song will not be about how you figured it all out. That song will be, “Jesus took me through, Jesus saved me, Jesus carried me, Jesus walked with me, Jesus defeated my enemies, Jesus took me over the finish line.” You are more than a

conqueror! There is no prison door that can hold you. There is no roaring voice that can drown out the voice of Almighty God, and no plan of hell formed against you can prosper. You are a child of God, and Jesus said, "I am taking you through to the other side." Hallelujah!

■ BECAUSE OF PRAYER

Look again at Paul's words: "...he will continue to deliver us. He will rescue us because you are helping by praying for us. As a result, many will give thanks to God because so many people's prayers for our safety have been answered" (2 Corinthians 1:10-11, NLT). Paul acknowledged that God would rescue them because people prayed, and as a result many would give thanks to God. I believe one of the greatest victories we will know in our time is simply the awareness that we are not walking this journey alone. It is not just about me, and it is not just about you, it is about the whole body of Christ. We spend so much of our time praying for ourselves, don't we? "Lord, help me; Lord, bless me; Lord, keep me; Lord, why me?" But the Lord says, "Would you let Me expand your thinking a little bit?" As you pray for those presently going through a tough season, when God brings them through, they will pray for you when your time comes. Then there will be great rejoicing, and many will give thanks to God.

How are we going to get through the days ahead? How are we even going to get through the present time? We will get through because we are going to pray and believe the promises of God. We will get through because we are moving together as a body—nobody will be left behind. That was the cry of Moses, "We will go with our young

and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go... Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind" (Exodus 10:9, 26). As the church—the Bride of Christ—we are going to make it to the other side. We are heading out of here—going home!

Today you may feel "pressed out of measure, above strength," as Paul wrote. People are facing serious battles. Some have lost children; some don't know where their next meal is coming from; some are fighting for their sanity; marriages are falling apart. I want you to know that we are standing with you—you are not alone. We are praying for God's grace and strength to be yours. You are not going to be overwhelmed; you are not going to go down—we are fighting this together, and we will walk in the victory Jesus has already secured for us. 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

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

This newsletter is an edited version of "A WORD FOR THOSE WHO FEEL LIKE QUITTING," a sermon given on **October 3, 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.