

LETTER FROM CARTER CONLON

Dear Friend,

There is a sense of urgency in my heart as this letter comes to you today. As events continue to unfold worldwide, it becomes increasingly evident that we are all in need of God's strength to face what lies ahead. The call of Christ in our lives is not just to personally survive but also to be a source of hope, strength and direction for others, just as the apostle Paul was in Acts 27.

As a people we are called to provide both physical and spiritual strength to those in need. In order to do this, we ourselves need God's assurance and His constant provision. Hence, this newsletter. It's time to ask!

Yours, in Christ,



Carter Conlon
Senior Pastor

ASK JESUS NOW FOR THE THINGS THAT YOU NEED

by Carter Conlon

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matthew 7:7–8). Interestingly, near the end of His life on earth, Jesus also said, *“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”* (John 16:24). Notice that Jesus was speaking to His disciples at the Last Supper, so to hear that they had asked nothing until this time must have been somewhat perplexing to them. After all, the very essence of discipling is a master/student relationship—one of asking and receiving. When the disciples left their nets and began to follow Jesus, that was the basis of the relationship—they asked, and He answered and gave them what they needed.

What Jesus was actually telling them, however, was that an unprecedented time of hardship was imminent. You and I know that Jesus was about to be taken captive and as a result, all the disciples would flee. He was essentially saying, “You are going to be afraid, and a sense of loss and sorrow will try to fill your hearts. But I will be with you to give you an inner strength only available to those who are willing to do My work in the earth.” You will see this thought very clearly presented to the disciples in portions of chapters 13 through 18 in the gospel of John. “As you walk in

the pathway that I have prescribed before you as My Body, you are going to have hope, vision, and joy. Up to this point you have not asked for what is really yours. But now, if you are willing to ask, you will receive all that you will need.”

Beloved, it is very hard to get the resources that Christ is willing to give once the calamity hits.

■ LATER MAY BE TOO LATE

In Matthew 25:4–8, Jesus gave an illustration of the day of Christ's return. The five wise virgins took oil in their lamps, but the five foolish virgins had no oil. When the crisis hit, the foolish said to the wise, “You seem to see something that we don't see. You stand here saying, ‘Behold the Bridegroom,’ yet we see nothing but darkness and calamity. Give us some of your oil!” Yet tragically they asked too late.

Beloved, it is very hard to get the resources that Christ is willing to give once the calamity hits. Remember Noah's day! Before the floods came, God closed the door of the ark and sealed Noah and his family inside. Imagine when the rain

started and people outside began banging on the door. They could not enter because the ark had been closed—the time of asking was over; the time of getting needed strength was past.

■ THE KIND OF TESTIMONY JESUS REQUIRES

In order to understand more specifically what Jesus was telling His disciples to ask for in our opening text, we need to know what kind of testimony He required them to have everywhere they went. Keep in mind that Matthew 7:7 comes at the end of a very long discourse that began in Matthew 5—when Jesus saw the multitudes and went up to a mountain. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them about what they were called to be in the earth.

I will paraphrase some of the verses of Scripture, but I encourage you to study it in detail on your own, for as His followers, we have received the same calling.

Let's begin in Matthew 5. We must recognize our need of God and long for His ways to be known in the earth. We must act with restraint even when it is within our power to do otherwise. He instructs us to hunger and thirst for inward purity, to be merciful, at peace with all men, and call others to peace with God and with each other. We are to endure persecution, even to the point of rejoicing because of it.

We should be as salt—bringing flavor, creating thirst, promoting healing, and bringing preservation into the earth. We are to do things publicly that bring glory to God, but at the same time, do them without the motive of being seen. What a phenomenal thought—let your light so shine that people may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Yet elsewhere Jesus also said, *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be*

seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father, which is in heaven” (Matthew 6:1).

How do I love my enemies? How do I truly forgive those who have wronged me? How do I stop thinking and worrying about tomorrow?

We must shun sexual lust. Jesus said that if a man even looks upon a woman with a lustful eye, he has committed adultery in his heart. We should remain true to our marriage vows. I know there are some exceptional circumstances, but if your marriage is going through a rough spot, don't just walk out. Marriage is a covenant you made with another person before God, and Paul says it is the closest reflection on earth of the love of Christ for His church. Unfortunately, we are living in an hour when the divorce rate in the church is very high, and it brings no glory to God.

We should bless and do good to our enemies. Remember that Peter came to Jesus and asked, “How many times should I forgive—seven times?” And Jesus answered, “No, not seven times, but rather seventy times seven.” That's four hundred and ninety times you should forgive somebody who does the same thing to you over and over again.

We are to pray for God's will to be done, that supply will be given to do it, that we might be ambassadors of

forgiveness, and that we might not be led astray. We are to acknowledge that God alone has the power to help us do this.

We must be aware of the danger of seeking security in anything of this world and letting the fear of tomorrow's provision consume our lives. Yes, we are going into a worldwide economic storm, but the Lord tells us that we must seek first His kingdom, with the promise that all that we need will be given to us.

We must be careful how we judge one another. While we are looking at a speck in our brother's eye, there might be a log in our own that we are unaware of. Jesus said that once we have dealt with what it is in our own heart, then we will see clearly. In other words, we will see our brother as Christ sees him, and we will deal tenderly.

Lastly, in the final verse before we get into our opening text, Jesus says, *“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you”* (Matthew 7:6). In other words, we must learn when to share truth and when to be quiet. When Jesus was brought before His accusers, He knew what was in their hearts and didn't answer them. If He had spoken divine truths, they would have just trampled it underfoot and made a mockery of the things of God.

■ IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE

Jesus shared so much in that one teaching on the mountain that when He was finished, His disciples were probably thinking exactly what you are thinking now: “How in the world am I ever going to do all these things? It's impossible! How do I love my enemies? How do I truly forgive those who have wronged me? How do I stop thinking and worrying about tomorrow?”

That is why Jesus then said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” He knew that we would need His resources in order to be all that He requires. Then Jesus went on to say something interesting, “Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?” (Matthew 7:9–10). Of course, these are not just random examples.

Previously, in Matthew 4, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. He had been without food for forty days when Satan came to Him and said, “...if You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (Matthew 4:3). In other words, “If You are God’s Son, must You go through hardship? Shouldn’t it be easy? You shouldn’t have to suffer and be deprived. Just command these stones to be turned into bread.”

But Jesus replied, “...it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). In other words, “I have been sent on a mission by My Father, and I am going to fulfill it. It doesn’t mean that I will always be comfortable. But I have a word from the Father that I am going to finish this journey in victory, and many are coming with Me.”

Many people in our generation have looked for an easy journey and attempted to use the power of God to turn every stone into bread—to make every hard place easy. But Jesus told His disciples, “What man is there of you, if his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone?” In other words, God will give you what you need to get you through every difficulty you face. You don’t have to figure a way out of your dilemma or try to use the power of God to make all the hard places easy.

Jesus continued, “...or if he ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent?” This is an incredible statement, for the Father sent His Son to become a fisher of my soul and of yours, and consequently to call us into His work to become fishers of men. This was the redemptive purpose of God in the earth, and it involved a cross—being rejected, enduring the ridicule and scorn of people who were opposing their own salvation. Yet the serpent had come to Jesus in the wilderness saying, “Here are all the kingdoms of the world. All You have to do is bow before me and acknowledge that God’s ways are not the only ways. Just bend your knee and circumvent the cross—go around the hardship and I will give it all to You right now.”

Whatever you want others to do for you, do for them. That is actually the key to unlocking all the resources that Jesus tells us to ask for.

Now if you ask for a fish, the Father is not going to give you a serpent. In other words, you may be asking, “Lord, I don’t want to be just a light testimony of who You are in my generation. Will You make me a fisher of men just as the early church was?” And unlike the serpents who are trying to tempt much of the church of this generation to go a different way, God is not going to come to you and say, “No, life is meant to be easy. You don’t have to suffer for the cause of Christ.” Instead, He will promise to see you through every difficulty that may arise as you walk with purpose in this

generation, and He will see you through to a victorious end.

■ THE KEY TO ALL THE RESOURCES

Jesus then continued, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12). It is as if Jesus were saying to them, “If I were hurting, I would want someone to comfort Me. If I were lost, I would want someone to give whatever they had to in order to get Me out.”

Whatever you want others to do for you, do for them. That is actually the key to unlocking all the resources that Jesus tells us to ask for. It is the key to enduring the scorn of those who oppose Him; the key to being kind to your enemies. It is the heart of God that says, “I am not willing that any should perish,” and it is what allows you to have your face slapped and not retaliate. It is the key to joy and love in the workplace despite the rudeness of others around you.

The promise at the end of the Scripture says, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24–25). The house was founded upon the work of God in the earth. That’s why Paul could be on a storm-battered ship, still standing and taking communion, and encouraging those who would have to swim to safety (see Acts 27). It was all about God’s glory and other people, not about his own preservation. Paul could see what ordinary men could not see—the captain of the ship and the other merchant seamen could not see it. But Paul’s eyes were opened and he was given incredible vision because he had chosen to be used for the glory of God and others. He

was a type of those who will have oil in the last days.

■ ASK NOW!

I encourage you to study these three chapters in Matthew. I have read them over and over, and I believe they give a clear vision of what the Christian life is supposed to be. The more you study these chapters, the more convinced you will be that you cannot live this life yourself—you need the power of God. So the Lord says to you, “Ask now!”

Don't put this off until tomorrow. There is a terrible storm coming, and it is going to happen suddenly, so don't get caught off guard.

This is the time we must all ask the Lord, “Please help us see anything we have embraced that displeases You. Help us to have the power to turn from things that we know are wrong, attitudes of heart that don't represent Christ, pursuits that are not of God but self-serving, indifference to the peril of those who are lost. Help us to love and forgive people as You do. Don't let us lose our zeal for doing Your work in the earth—for You promised that when the storm comes, we will not be shaken by it.”

I am certain the Holy Spirit has spoken to you about something that you need. So ask of Him! An

incredible victory was won on the cross. When Jesus rose from the dead, the same Spirit that raised Him up will also quicken our mortal bodies. He will lift us, give us strength, cause us to be what we are not and bring us into the victory that was won for us. All things are possible now. You don't have to pray a prayer and then go buy seven books on how to do something. Simply ask—the promise is for everybody who wants the life of Christ.

Beloved, don't put this off until tomorrow. There is a terrible storm coming, and it is going to happen suddenly, so don't get caught off guard. The last days on this planet are going to be horrendous days, deeper and darker than anything our natural minds can imagine. If you have the ears to hear, the Lord is saying to His church today, “Ask Me now for the things you are going to need.”

Sometimes “the ask” is just a groan, “Oh, God, I fall so far short.” Yet the Lord says, “But I don't fall short, and I am within you. We will walk together, and I will cause you to stand in the midst of the storm. I will give you supernatural vision to see the value of every soul and the strength you need to represent Me in this generation. From the inside out you will begin to change, and you will see how willing I am to be God to 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

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 “ASK JESUS NOW FOR THE THINGS THAT YOU NEED,” a sermon given on **November 14, 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.