

When Angel Leads a Church

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's presence and the call for the church to move forward in faith and deliverance.

Duration: 1:10:55

Scripture: Exodus 33:14-18, Exodus 33:21 - 34:1

Topics: "Gods Presence", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's presence and not settling for mere religious routines or messages. It highlights the need for a sincere desire to walk with God, to have His abiding presence, and to be led by Him in all aspects of life. The message calls for a deep longing for God's glory and a willingness to be transformed by His presence, leading to a life marked by the miraculous and a genuine pursuit of God's will.

Transcript

Turn with me in your Bibles now to the Old Testament, Exodus chapter 33. I'm going to be speaking a message this morning entitled, When an Angel Leads the Church. When an angel leads the church, let's pray as we're finding that together.

Father, we thank you, God, for your presence. Lord, we cherish your presence. Thank you, Lord, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit that will enable me to speak this message clearly and simply that everyone that you gathered together in this house might be able to understand it.

Father, I thank you for it, God, today from the very depths of my heart. I ask, Lord, that you would empower me and enable me to speak clearly and simply and right from your heart so that what's in your heart might be conveyed to your people. Give us ears to hear and hearts to embrace the truth that will set us free.

Father, we thank you for it from the very depths of our heart today, in Jesus' name. Exodus 33, verses 1 to 3, And the Lord said to Moses, Depart and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it, and I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Levite, the Hivite, rather, and the Jebusite, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. For I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the

way.

Now, I want to take a little bit of a journey. I'm going to take some history of God's people of that generation, Israel, the nation of Israel. God called a man called Abraham and told him, I'm going to bless you, and people are going to come from you, and these people are going to be a blessing to all the nations of the world.

Now, this is an absolute type of a promise that is fulfilled in our generation through the church, the true church of Jesus Christ in the world that we live in today. And the Bible tells us, if we go back to Exodus chapter 14, let's take it, we're going to take a very quick journey, that they were taken out of captivity by a mighty deliverance from God. Exodus 14.8 says, The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel.

But the children of Israel went out with a high hand. In the original Hebrew text, it means with a mighty deliverance. They came out of captivity.

There's always something of darkness that wants to captivate the people of God. If you are a Christian, you're fully aware of that. If you are not, you're very aware of that.

There's an encroaching darkness all around you, trying to grip your mind, grip your heart, your spirit, constantly trying to convince you there is no hope, you'll never amount to anything, there is no tomorrow, there's no future, there's no God. Absolute lies intended on captivating you, convincing you that there's an inherent weakness in you that will cause you to stay captivated all the rest of your life. But God always transcends that when there's a people who cry out to him.

He sent a man, an 80-year-old man with his 82-year-old brother, with nothing, no weaponry but a stick and a word from God. And they went in and confronted one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful army of their generation, and walked into Pharaoh's court and stood before Pharaoh and Moses, just had a word from God. God said, let my people go.

You see, beloved, that's enough. When God speaks something, it has to happen. There doesn't have to be an army behind it if God speaks it.

That is the miracle of our salvation. When God says, I will cleanse you, then he will cleanse you. When God says, I'll forgive you, he will forgive you.

When God says, no power of hell can prosper against you, that's exactly what it means. There is no army necessary because the Word of God created the very worlds that we live in today. It's by his Word that we live and breathe and have our existence.

Amazing how they were brought out of this incredible captivity, just like you and I were when we came to Christ. There are testimonies here today, wonderful testimonies of how you were brought out with a mighty deliverance. If we had time today, I'm sure all over this sanctuary and in the education annex, people could stand up and say, Pastor, you're preaching my life.

I was captivated by immorality or captivated by substance abuse or captivated by memories of the past or captivated by fears of the future. But I don't know how it happened, but I believed God and he brought me out and all these captivating fears fell away and I can honestly stand and tell you I'm free by the power of God today. I've been delivered with a mighty hand.

I don't know how it happened, but it happened. And suffice to say that God spoke it and it came into existence. He spoke freedom into my life.

I received it and just like God said, let there be light and there was light. Light came into me. Exodus 14, verse 13, and Moses said to the people, fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show you today.

For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace. The Lord said to Moses, why do you cry to me? Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward.

Lift up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it and the children of Israel shall go through on dry ground through the midst of the sea. That's an incredible thing when you think of it. Pharaoh said the land has entangled them.

It's always been the devil's design to entangle the church in the land. If he can box the church in, in this case it was a physical place that they were led to where there was an impossibility. They couldn't go forward because the sea was before them and seemingly couldn't go backwards because the armies of their enemies were behind them.

That's always the devil's design to stop the work of God in your life, to entangle you, to ensnare you with the thoughts as it is of this of this mindset of this generation. The thoughts which are against the thoughts of God, to bring you into captivity to the land as it is. But God spoke a word to Moses and Moses said to the people, do not fear, verse 13, stand still and see the salvation.

Now the word salvation in the Hebrew is Yeshua. Stand still and see Yeshua. Now it's the root word, it's from the root word yashya, which means to be open wide or to be set free.

It is the root word from which the personal name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is derived. Stand still and see Yeshua. This is still the cry to the church today.

That was the cry back then. He said now listen I want you to see something. You don't have to fight this battle.

All you have to do is stand still and see because God is in your midst. God, the presence of God is with you. Stand still and see Yeshua.

And if you will stand still and look upon him, if you will understand him, if you will let him speak into your heart and into your spirit, all the enemies which are pursuing you, you will see them no more. You won't see them because you're looking in another direction. You are seeing the one who has the power over them.

And he says in verse 14, the Lord will fight for you and you will hold your peace. In other words, you will rest. The word for peace means rest.

The Lord will fight for you and you will walk in his rest. And the Lord said to Moses, why do you cry to me? Speak to the children of Israel that they they go forward. And beloved by faith, as the Church of Jesus Christ, we are called forever to go forward, forever to be on the move, forever to be as it is journeying deeper and deeper into the heart of God, the will of God for our lives.

Journeying deeper into the person of Jesus Christ, allowing his very will and nature to be formed in us. The Bible says changing us from image to image and glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old things in him pass away and behold, all things become new. Ever going forward. We're never to stop.

We're to be moving forward all the days of our lives here on this earth, deeper and deeper into a trust of God, deeper and deeper into the plan of God for our lives, deeper and deeper into the victory of Calvary, deeper and deeper into the very power of God that can shake hell itself and see people released from the very grip of darkness that permeates virtually this whole world that has alienated itself from God. And we're to move forward to a place, Exodus 15, 13 says, the place that is where we are set apart for God. Exodus 15, 13, he says, thou and thy mercy has led forth the people which thou hast redeemed and thou hast girded them or guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

And the word for holy in the Hebrew means a place that is a part or consecrated to God. And this is where God is leading us, constantly leading us, if we can hear him, into a place where we are set apart for him, exclusively for him, for his use, for his purpose. Folks, this is not labor.

This is joy. This is victory, to be walking in the presence of God. There's absolutely nothing like it in the universe, to walk in the presence of God.

How do you describe this? How do you put it into words? How do you tell people that every morning I'm seeing new mercy? Every day there's an infusion of God's life in some area of my life where I've failed. God has changed me. How do you explain that? That I'm being, my mind is expanding by the Spirit of God.

I'm understanding things I never understood before. He's enabling me to do what I could never do. He's taking me where I could never go.

He's lifted me, as David said, from the dunghill and set me among princes. How do you explain that? How do you tell somebody, unless they experience it themselves, being led by God to a place where God can use our lives for his glory? Exodus 15, verses 14 again and 16, he said, "...the people shall hear and shall be afraid and sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Philistia." Now these are, this is what we are to be. We are to be conquerors of that which occupies God's places of promise, not just for ourselves but also for others.

You see, the enemy comes in. There is a devil. There is an enemy who hates God and he moves in and begins to conquer and occupy homes, places, marriages, children's minds, lives, countries.

We are called to walk in, in the power of our God and just by the simple presence of God walking with us, God among us, we are to conquer these places and to see people released into the very life that God has for them in Jesus Christ. He says, "...the Dukes of Eden," verse 15, Exodus 15, "...shall be amazed. The mighty men of Moab trembling shall take hold upon them.

All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them by the greatness of thine arm. They shall be as still as stone till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which thou has purchased." And God's plan for his children was, I'm sending you into places and I'm just with you and by virtue of my presence in your midst, there's a fear and a trembling and a melting going to

happen in the very hearts of your enemies.

Everywhere you go, you're going to see the kingdom of God advance and the kingdom of darkness is going to fall away and people will be released from the grip of darkness. Now, from this place, they were eventually led to a mountain where God was going to reveal himself to them in greater measure. Now, I'm really going quickly through this, you have to understand.

Exodus 19, verses 3, it says, verse 3, it says, "...Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel." Verse 4, Exodus 19, "...you have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I buried you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall you be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

And these are the words with that which thou shalt speak to the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.

And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." You see, he told them his plan. He said, I'm going to bring you to myself, and you're going to be a kingdom of priests to me. You're going to worship me, and live for me, and I'm going to walk with you.

And it's going to be an incredible thing, because I will lift you up as it is, above all the people on the earth. And the lifting up, in a sense, will be my presence among you, that everyone will have to bow their knee, and confess with their tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord. Oh, there's a, beloved, there's a wonderful difference between religion and relationship.

Religion is man's attempt to change himself from the outside in. It doesn't work. But relationship is God saying, I will come and abide with you, and I will change you from the inside out.

And I will lift you up, and there will be such a change in you, it will be undeniable. Who will be able to say there is no God, when they see me in you? And this was God's plan for his people. This is God's plan for his church, even in our generation.

And the people heard these words, and they said, We will do it. We understand your plan for us, O God. We understand that you want to lift us up, and you want to make us a kingdom of worshippers of you, and a holy nation.

And we understand what it is, that you brought us here by your power, and you will continue to take us through by your power. We were brought here on eagle's wings. There was no effort on our part.

We just got up and walked. That's all we could do. They had no weapons to get out of Egypt.

As a matter of fact, they didn't even have a whole lot of faith. But the little they had, they exercised. And subsequently, they, you know the story, how they just simply obeyed, in the end, the words that God spoke to them.

And they got up, and they began to walk. And they saw the most mighty army in the world have to release them, and let them go. Not only released them, but decorated them with spoils.

Their neighbors gave them everything they asked for, because God said to his people, You're not going out as runaway slaves. You're going to go out as sons of the king, and daughters of the king. You're not leaving this place, sneaking out the back door.

You're going out the front door. And you're going to be arrayed as sons and daughters of God. Incredible when you think of it.

The people just got up and began to walk. And God said, Because I am with you, there's nothing can withstand you. There's no power evil can hold you.

There's no kingdom can keep you down. You're going to be moving forward, and you're going to be decorated with my presence. And all the world is going to tremble, because I'm going to send you into places where there are strongholds.

And when they hear you're coming, their hearts are going to melt. And they're going to tremble. Even the mighty men of Moab are going to melt away.

The strongest among them, fear will grip them. You see, this is a type of what happens in the spiritual realm, when a son or daughter of God finally makes the decision, I'm going to live for Christ. There might be strongholds in your home.

There might be strongholds in your life or your mind, when you make that decision to live for God and stand up, even in your weakness. God says, No, it's not about you, it's about me. I'm releasing you from captivity.

I'm going to take you right to the center of your strongholds. And as you begin, just simply by faith to walk towards them. You've got no weaponry in your hand, but you do have a trusting heart in what I've spoken to you.

And as you walk to the center of your stronghold, these things are going to begin to melt and tremble, because my presence is with you. Incredible, when we begin to realize what God was speaking to His people. He brought them to a mountain, and at this mountain, in verse 16, it says, On the third day in the morning there were thunders and lightnings and thick clouds on the mountain, the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and all the people that were in the camp trembled.

They trembled. It does produce a trembling, when we begin to realize that God Almighty is speaking to us. God Almighty is willing to take my life and make something out of it.

God Almighty has invited me into His presence. God Almighty, in spite of my failures, in spite of all my flaws and shortcomings, through His Son Jesus Christ, God Almighty has invited me to His throne. I have access to God.

I don't need somebody. I don't need anybody other than Christ. I am fully accepted with God because of Jesus Christ.

I trusted in Him, and He forgave my sin. I acknowledged that Christ went to a cross and died for my sin. I asked Him into my life to be my Lord and Savior.

I remember in the younger years, when I first came to Christ, that trembling in my heart. In part, it's awe. It's this awe, that how could it be that I am invited into the presence of God? How could it possibly be that

He accepts me just as I am with all my failings? But yet it is.

I remember saying the first time I heard that old hymn of the church, I think it's Charles Wesley wrote it, and can it be that I should gain? How is it, O God, that you've fought upon me and you've reached down to me, you've touched my life and drawn me to yourself, in spite of all of my struggles and all of my weaknesses, you've called me? But not only called me, you've made me promises. They're great promises. They're so far beyond my understanding that I tremble to think, O God, that this could be my life.

I remember one day I was just walking into a building, a young Christian, not much of a speaker, little or no ability, and I remember walking into a place and I looked out a window and I saw an airplane going, and the Holy Spirit said, this is going to be much of your life. Much of your life is going to be traveling. Much of your life, Carter, he said, is going to be going to different places to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I remember looking at that airplane thinking in my heart, how could this be? How could it be? It can't be but by the presence of God. There is no other way it can be. We can't take a crash course on understanding God and presenting Him to people.

His presence has to be with us. There is no other way that it can happen. And one of the signs that you are drawing close to God is that trembling comes into your spirit and into your heart.

O God, God, could it be that this thought that I'm always pushing away from my mind, that this thing that I don't want to hear, that you want to do, could it be that you really are going to do this through my life? Could it be, O God, that you're going to take me and make me and use me and prove your life through me? That you really are Christ? That you really do sit at the right hand of power? That you really did rise from the grave on the third day? Are you really? Is it? Could it be? And the people trembled. Then in Exodus 24, the Lord took Moses and Aaron and Aaron's two sons and 70 elders up into his presence. Now, up to this time to see God meant to die.

You see, after, after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, sin entered the human race. A sin nature came to the, into the human race. And as soon as a man or woman sins, they're cut off from God, actually cut off forever, apart from God's mercy through Jesus Christ.

And up to this point, to see God meant to die because sin can't dwell in the presence of a holy God. To come into God in a sinful condition meant an instantaneous death. And here God invites Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu in 70, verse 9 in chapter 24, Exodus, of the elders of Israel.

And the Bible says they saw the God of Israel. And there were under his feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone. And as it were, the body of heaven in his darkness, his clearness rather.

You have to forgive me, I'm getting old and my eyes are getting a little dim. I've either got to get a shorter pulpit or I'm gonna have to start wearing my glasses soon. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel, he laid not his hand and they saw God and did eat and drink.

How awesome this must have been. What incredible revelation. These 70 elders and Moses and Aaron and Aaron's sons coming down out of that mountain.

And think of the report to tell the people, folks, we were invited into God's presence and we lived. We didn't die. We ate and drank with him.

And he has not dealt with us according to our iniquities. Now what a type of Jesus Christ this is. It is only through Jesus Christ that we are considered the righteousness of God, through faith in his sacrifice on Calvary.

That's where our cleansing comes from. And what a report. Here these elders come and they say we were invited into God's presence and we ate and drank with him and we saw him and he stood on a clear glass platform as it is.

His feet were like a sapphire. It was incredible. And we didn't die.

And the people would have said, oh how incredible this is to be invited because God was very methodically revealing himself to his own people, his children, his heart, that I want you in my presence. You know it was all leading up to Christ in Calvary, but he was telling his people this is my design for you. I wanted people to myself.

I want to draw you into my presence and you will eat and drink with me. You will know me because it's been in my heart to have intimate fellowship with my creation from the time of Adam and Eve. It's been in my heart to have you in my presence.

It's been in my heart to walk with you. It's been in my heart that you can know my glory again. It's been in my heart that you can come into my presence and not die.

It's been with me. And I think when the elders came back and gave that report to the people how it should have deepened the sense of awe. The sense of awe in the camp of Israel.

God has invited us into his presence. We stand before God, the King. He has invited us into his presence, but instead in a very, very short while something in the camp of the people was released that should be a warning to every Christian in every church.

Exodus 32 tells us that the people refashioned God. You see they thought that God could be refashioned from men's minds so that people can indulge in their own appetites and follow their own sensual leadings and still say God is with us. Moses was in the mountain only for 40 days and 40 nights and the people said well we don't know what's become of him.

Make us a God. And so Aaron, and that always astounds me, Aaron saw God and days later he's fashioning with his own hands a golden cap. I'll never comprehend that until I get to heaven itself.

But you see it's it's equally incomprehensible. How can people who once knew God and walked in the presence of God do the same thing even in our generation? It happens. It happens.

Look at the history of many denominational churches throughout the world. Look where they were born. Look at the glory of God that was in their midst.

The understanding of spiritual things they had. And in spite of this understanding, something in the heart of man that if it's never dealt with will eventually cause all, even those who once knew Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, it will cause them to reform him to another image. And it's simply this desire that the Bible says they sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

It's it's that it's that desire in the human heart that says, well God thank you so much for bringing me this far. Thank you for taking me out of captivity. Thank you God for defeating my enemies.

Thank you for taking me through the Red Sea of my impossibility miraculously. But I'm, I, you know what, thank you for leading me forward. Thank you for giving me revelation of what you want to do through my life and how you want to astound the nations with what you're going to do in me.

Thank you for all this understanding, but it's still in my heart to live for myself. It's still in my heart to sit down and take my ease as it is and not go forward anymore and to rise up and play. Beloved, it's that one thing that is never, if it's never dealt with, it will cause you to form another God.

I have people sometimes that come to me and say, well my God, and as soon as they say that, my God. I had a man come to me one time and said, you know my God never raises his voice. I said, who is your God? He says, my God never gets angry.

I said, well if you're talking about Jesus Christ, he went into the temple, he overturned the tables, made a scourge of cords and threw them all out. He said, I don't believe the Spirit of God causes a man to raise his voice. And I said, well help me with John the Baptist then.

But he didn't want to hear me because he had another God. He'd formed something in his mind. Bottom line is quite often these people want to live their own life.

I want God, but I want my own life. And somehow I want God to fit in with my life. I have plans, you see, and I have ambitions.

I have dreams and aspirations. And I understand what God wants to make me, but I'm not quite in tune with that. And so I've decided that I'm going to form a God that will bless my objectives.

He will bless my path. He will bless my pursuits. And I can sit down and begin to rest, and it's another kind of a rest though, and rise up and begin to play and say God is with me.

You see, when Adam and Eve fell to the lie that God can be lightly dealt with and they could still somehow be better for it, they lost his presence. Satan came to them and said, listen, you can make your own decisions independent of God and follow your own path, and you'll be wiser for it, and you'll be blessed for it. And they bought the lie.

And they, yes, their eyes were open to the knowledge of good and of evil. They then knew they were naked because they lost the presence of God. It was God's presence that had been their covering.

And when they began to move in another direction, they lost it. And all they could do from this time forward was tell others about his presence. Tell others what he was like to be in the presence of God.

About him, but no longer his presence there. Incredible when you begin to think of it. There's always consequences for these things.

For Israel, we see in Exodus 32 that there was confusion, division, and internal fighting. Verses 27-28, it says, the Lord said, put every man his sword by his side and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses.

And there fell of the people that day about 3,000 men. Always fighting, always division, confusion. Whenever you see a people turning away from God, when that singleness of heart is being lost, when the church is no longer moving forward in step with Christ, no longer desiring to be a manifestation as it is of

his glory to our generation.

No longer her pursuits are in line with his, or her life in line with his plan or will for their lives. You'll always see confusion, division, and fighting. But the most devastating thing of all is the opening scripture we started with today in Exodus 33, verses 2 to 3, where the Lord says, I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and all the rest onto a land flowing with milk and honey, for I will not go up in the midst of thee, thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way.

He says, I won't go with you. I'm going to send an angel. You're going to be led now by a message and no longer by my presence.

That's tragic. I can't think of anything worse to happen to the church of Jesus Christ, to be led by messages and not by God Almighty himself. To come into the house of God and now to hear a messenger no longer meeting with God.

The manifested glory of God is no longer there. Now you know what I'm talking about, because in this house when you come in here, you feel his presence. Yes, I know Christ is in us.

Christ sits at the right hand of glory, but he also dwells among his people. He says clearly in the scripture that he inhabits the praises of his people. You feel that glory.

There's a residence of God where his people are meeting and are one in heart with his purposes. But he tells his people, yes, there's a time now, because your objectives are not in line with mine. You have pursued me as it is, but only to a point.

Now, he said, you're going to be led by a message. How many churches today do people go into and hear messages about God, about Christ, but his presence is not there? How to live the Christian life? Three steps to a conforming home. Two steps to freedom from immorality.

A message is about God, but his presence is not there. Do you remember what God said to the children of Israel? He said, stand still and see Yeshua and hold your peace, because God will fight for you. When you are in the presence of God, when God is walking with you, it's not three steps to anything.

There's a word spoken to your heart. You believe that word, and God by his glory brings the change. How tragic churches all over the world today are being led by messages, but not sitting in the presence of God.

And lest you think it's just an Old Testament truth that I'm speaking today. In the book of Revelation, let me just paraphrase it for you. We won't turn there.

To the church of Ephesus. Now, these are first-generation churches after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are messages given by Christ himself to the Apostle John.

He said to the church of Ephesus, you've lost your first love. In other words, Ephesus, you don't understand my love for you, and you don't love me the way you used to love me. You are not passionately pursuing me the way you used to.

And he says, if you don't repent, I will quickly remove your candlestick. In other words, my presence will leave. And all of these messages are to the angel of the church of Ephesus, to the angel of the church of Sardis, to the angel of the church of Pergamos.

In the New Testament, the angel, it could mean a literal physical angel, but it could also mean a messenger, a bishop, a pastor, a minister, a leader. Christ said, this is the message I want you to give my people. You've left off the true pursuit, and you are in danger of losing my presence.

I'm going to take your candlestick. The candlestick is the light. It's the very life of God.

It's what differentiates you and I from the rest of the world. It's God's presence in us. It's not just that we don't just have a theology.

Thank God we have his living presence within us. We have his glory. He manifests his glory when we gather together to corporately worship him.

He manifests his glory and gives us a reassurance that he is with us and working with us and through us. To the angel of the church of Pergamos, he said, he told this particular church, he said, you are tolerating prophets for hire. Balaam, he called them.

Prophets for hire are coming into your house. Greedy men that preach the gospel for money. You are opening your heart to them.

You're opening your home to them. You're refusing to turn them out. He tells the church of Pergamos, if you don't turn from this, they're going to steal your heart.

You're going to become just like they are. They are false prophets who make you believe that you can sit down, eat and drink, and rise up to play, and somehow this is okay with God. You can live a life pursuing your own objectives.

Your whole focus can all be about how I can fulfill my destiny, become a better person, how I can do this, how I can do that. It's all about yourself. It's another God.

It's a calf that's been fashioned by men's minds. These are prophets for hire. He said, you have to overcome them to get the revelation.

He said, to those who overcome this, I will give you hidden manna. That's revelation. I'll give you revelation these prophets don't have.

I'll let you see Yeshua again. You'll begin to understand where the source of your life and strength comes from. And he says, I'll give you a white stone.

We heard so wonderfully about that last week, how that white stone is a type of the stone that God put in David's hand to take down the giants that were opposing Israel. But the inference is, if you will allow these prophets of Baal to come into your heart, you'll have no revelation of me, and you'll have no power over your enemies. In other words, you will lose my presence.

You'll be led now by a message, but you'll no longer have the Messiah in your midst. To the angel of the church of Sardis, he said, here's a church now that has a reputation. But he told Sardis, you have no true life.

He said, you have a reputation that you live, but you're dead. And the word death in the Greek New Testament means you are cut off from the vivifying power of the Holy Spirit. You are cut off from the life of God.

You have a reputation, and you're riding on that reputation. But you don't have any more a seeking heart. You're living on the past.

You can't live on the past. Beloved Times Square Church, we can't live on the past. Wonderful what God has done in the past.

Wonderful the victories that we have seen the Lord do in 15 years in this church, but you can't live on the past. There has to be a constant seeking of God in the heart. He said, if you don't repent, he said, I'll come on you as a thief, and I'll take what little you have left.

Amazing when the presence of the Lord leaves His people. I'm talking about now His manifested presence leaves, and they're not even aware of it. All you have to do is be a student of church history to see this has happened time and again throughout history.

Churches birthed in the very glory of God, and then all of a sudden you look at them today and you wonder, when did God's presence leave this church? The angel of the church of Laodicea. Now here's a church that is adorned in what God had already given them. They are wealthy and increased with goods and had a sense in their heart that they no longer had any need, and I believe that's what their downfall was.

It's not wrong. God will bless His people. I don't think that's arguable.

God will bless those. The Bible clearly states it, but it's not so much that they were rich and increased in goods, it's the fact that in their heart they said, I don't have need of nothing. Even God, they've lost their sense of their need.

This church of Laodicea, and this was a church, a one-first-generation church from the cross, and in this church Christ was already gone. His presence was gone. They were now being led by a message, but they didn't have the manifested presence of Jesus Christ in their midst.

Bible tells us clearly Christ said, I'm outside this church knocking, trying to get back in. I'm not in the midst of this sanctuary. I'm outside, and I'm knocking at the hearts as it is at the doors of the people.

You see, when he's no longer in his church, there's no longer a sense of awe, no longer an awe. Coming into God's presence becomes a common thing. How are you doing today? How's your car running? Did you change the oil last Friday? What are you doing after the service? I'll race you to the parking garage so you can get there first.

There's no longer a sense of awe when he's outside of the church. The sense of awe is lost, a sense of awe. Now, I don't say this lightly, and I'm not going to say it at all, but I have a sense of awe when I come into the house of God, that I have been invited into the presence of the King.

The Creator of the universe wants fellowship with me. There's an awe in my heart, oh God, and a sense that meeting with God means change, means life. It means another step in God's plan for my life.

Even when I don't understand it, it means another step. There's a sense of awe. Last night in prayer, just standing up my rooftop, there's always that sense of awe that I'm not trying to hope God is here.

I'm in the presence of God. He's hearing every word I'm speaking. I'm not only hearing, He's answering me.

A sense of awe as I watch His hand leading my home and family and life and changing my heart and mind. There's this awe of coming into the presence of God, not just in this sanctuary, but every time I get together with God and with fellow believers in Christ. When Christ is no longer manifested in His church, there are few, if any, testimonies of the miraculous.

In Exodus, here is Moses up on the mountain getting instructions from God about how the people are to dwell and have communion with Him, while the people are down below fashioning a calf. In Exodus 31, God says, verse 3 says, I've filled Him with the Spirit of God. Now, He's talking about, He said, I've called somebody.

His name was Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. He says, I've filled Him with the Spirit of God in wisdom and understanding and knowledge and all manner of workmanship, to devise coming works, to work in gold and silver and brass and the cutting of stones and to set them and to carve the timber and all manner of workmanship. And I've given with Him a holy ab of the tribe of Dan and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted, I have put wisdom that they may make all that I have commanded thee.

Oh, there are testimonies of the miraculous when God is there, you see, because God is putting into you and I, His people, the ability to do what He's called us to do. That's the miraculous. I'm not talking just about eyes opening and sore limbs being healed and such like, as wonderful as that is, but there's a deeper miraculous.

As we are in His presence, when He's manifesting His glory, He is constantly putting into you and I things that we don't have. If you are a true seeker of God, I tell you today, you will not be the same going out this door as when you came in. Something has been put in you by the Spirit of God.

You are changing. You are being made by God's presence, by His Holy Spirit into the very thing that God designed you to be and desires you to be for His glory. He puts into your heart the desire to do certain things for His namesake in His house.

He puts it in you. You might be the most unloving person in the world when you come to Christ, the most intolerable person, and He puts into your heart to be part of the ministry of hospitality here at Times Square Church. And you find yourself greeting guests.

You find yourself saying, do you enjoy your stay in New York City and it's wonderful to have you. And in your heart you're saying, how did this happen? How did this happen? I don't, I didn't even like people when I came in here. That's the miraculous.

That's the miraculous. Hallelujah. Where He is, there's this sense of the miraculous.

This sense, oh God, you are here with me. All I have to do is stand still and see you. And you will begin to put into me things that I I don't know how to do.

I will never know how to do it, but you will put it in me. You will change me. You will raise me.

And God, I don't do it for this reason, but people will see it. And they will have to glorify you. People who once knew me, think of the Gadarene demoniac who's running through the tombs.

And he's cutting himself and he's, he's unchainable. And Christ sets him free and touches him and says, I'll make you an evangelist. Go back to your hometown and tell people what I've done for you.

Well, it wasn't just a commission leaving some guy all full of scars. No, it was a, it was a wholeness. As he headed into that town, you can just see the Spirit of God had come upon this man, giving him all the things that an evangelist needs to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Christ is no longer, when the presence of Christ is no longer in his church, there's a loss of willingness. You go through the Bible and whenever there is any great revival, when Nehemiah came back, says that the people were willing. When Solomon built the temple, when David started gathering materials to build the temple, the Bible says the people were willing.

They gave willingly. When Solomon began to build, it says they came willingly. You'll find it all through the Old Testament and into the New.

There's a willingness. God is there. There's a willingness in the heart.

Lord, I'm here to meet you and I'm here to release my life for your purposes. God, there's a willingness in me. Whatever you want me to do, wherever you want to take me, whatever you want to make me, I yield to it.

I yield to it. There's a greater kingdom than living for my own self. Living for my own desires and trying to form some other kind of a God in my mind.

God forbid that I should do this. Yours is the kingdom. Yours is the power and the glory.

There is no other kingdom but your kingdom. Lord, I yield my life. I yield my will.

I yield my family. I yield my everything. There's a willingness in me to meet you and let you use my life for your purposes.

Jesus said to the church you're there to see, I'm outside already because you're comfortable, you're content, but I want to meet with you. Won't you open to me again? Incredible thing when you imagine God Almighty knocking at the door of his own church. I wonder how many churches met today around the world with Christ at the door knocking.

His glory is outside. There's no longer any glory inside, just a messenger. But no presence of God.

You ever been in places like that? I've been in many of them. Just a messenger, no presence of God. You're dead, dull, and dry coming in.

Dead, dull, and dry through the whole service and dead, dull, and dry going out. No presence of God. Just a whole bunch of smoke and fluff and an imitation of who God is supposed to be.

And that's cross-denominational. That can happen anywhere. It could happen here.

God forbid, God forbid that five years from today that we should gather in his presence, not be here. God forbid that there should be a people who are content with the places where they have come to and said, well, this is far enough for me. I'm quite comfortable here.

I want to play for a little while. I'm tired of the journey. I'm tired of the trip, and it's been miraculous.

It's been wonderful, but I just want to play for a while. And of course, God, you don't mind if I play and just begin to very subtly fashion him until he looks like something else than he is. You see, beloved, when

Christ died for us, he bought the rights to our lives.

We are no longer our own. We are his now. He has the right to us.

It's like a marriage relationship. When you get married to somebody, could you imagine you leave the altar, and you've exchanged vows, and your bride or your groom says, well, I'm going off to Hawaii for a week. I'll see you.

You know, I've got my own life to live. We would never think of it. It'd be ridiculous doing this in a marriage.

Anybody would look and say, that marriage is not going to last. But so many people think we can do this with God. We can come to the living God who invites us into his presence and say, well, thanks.

It's been nice that you saved me. I'll be doing my thing, and if should you care to join me, I'd like to invite you. I'm outside.

Exodus 33, I'm going to close with this. Verse 6 tells us that the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb. And that speaks to me of pride.

There's some denominations, beloved, that are so proud now that God himself couldn't get back in. So proud. What do you mean God's not with us? We're rich.

We're blessed. We're made of nothing. Who are you to tell us that something is wrong? You know, I think of the churches of Revelation where, can you imagine, can you imagine the attitude of some, perhaps, when the messengers stood and said, I've heard from God.

And, beloved, we're in trouble here. We don't love him like we used to. There are many in this church that have got prophets for hire staying in your homes.

You're listening to the tapes. You're listening to another gospel than the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I think of others as it goes on.

And imagine the pastor of Laodicea that has to get up in his church and say, Christ is no longer here. I bring you a message today. He's outside the door wanting to get back in.

Can you imagine the irateness? Can you imagine the anger, the pride that might rise up in some of the people and say, what do you mean? Look at the history of this place. Come on now. We're the people that walked through fire and flood.

We have all the knowledge of God. We're the teachers teaching our generation. We know all about him.

We have the message. And to have a messenger stand and say, yes, but you've lost his presence. Something is in you.

Something has gotten a hold of your heart. They stripped themselves of their pride. I've had a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful, wonderful week of prayer.

I honestly think it's been one of the most powerful times of prayer, perhaps of my life, where God has drawn me into his presence and shown me some things that I need to let him deal with. Things in my life and in my heart. I came onto this platform a couple days this week and spent a part of the afternoon praying here.

And I wept before God when he showed me some things that need to change in me. I wept for you when I began to hear something that he was speaking. You see, because he knows the end of all things.

He knows, he already knows what this church will look like ten years from now. He knows it. The Bible says that Moses, verse 7 says, took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, far off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation.

Now, the Hendrickson commentary says that Moses took his...the tabernacle wasn't formed at this time. Moses took his own tent. It was his own house.

He took his own tent and pitched it outside the camp. And he called it the tent of meeting or the place of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to this tabernacle of the congregation, which was outside of the camp.

There is a time when you just got to get out of the situation, out of the frame of mind, out of...out of what everybody's speaking around you. You may not physically move, but spiritually you've got to move. You just got to get out and begin to seek God all over again.

And Moses did this. He took his tent and pitched it outside the whole camp. He just got away from all the voices and all those that were talking about all the history of the past and what was going on and why they did what they did.

He just got out and got alone with God. Verse 8 says, It came to pass when Moses went to the tabernacle that all the people rose up and stood every man in his tent door and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle. It came to pass as he emerged or entered into the tabernacle, a cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle and the Lord talked with Moses.

And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door and all the people rose up and worshipped every man in his tent door. And this speaks something to me, that people were moved by this man's dedication. They were moved.

Actually, one commentary says they stood in their door and saluted him as he walked by to seek God, but they didn't join him. You can't ride this Christian life on somebody else's passion. You have to have your own.

It's not good enough to salute the men and women who are seeking God. Say, God bless you, Pastor David. You're being used all over the world.

God bless you, Pastor Carter, Pastor Neal. God bless you, Pastor Patrick. God bless you, Sister, Brother, so-and-so.

God bless you, Times Square Church Choir. And stand in the door of your tent and salute as those go by who are seeking God. It's not good enough.

The scripture says everyone who sought the Lord went out into the same place and met with God. And then Moses prayed and says, verse 13, he says, Now therefore I pray thee, if I've found grace in thy sight, show me thy way. In other words, thy way means the path for my life.

That's what actually the Hebrew text says. God, if I found grace, show me your path for my life. That's simply the prayer.

If you are with me, if I found grace, oh God, show me the path you have for my life. Whether it's Africa, India, Asia, God, show me the path. And let it start now in my house, with my family, in my neighborhood, in my city.

Let it start where I live now. Show me the path for my life, oh God. It's not my plans you will bless.

It's not my will, but it's your will that needs to be done. God, if I found favor, show me your path. That was the cry of a righteous heart.

That's the cry that sets its tent outside the camp. The whole camp can be living in death, but there are always the people that come outside and say, God, show me. If I found favor, show me.

Lead me. Guide me. That I may know that I found grace in your sight.

God, I will know because you're leading me. And that this nation is thy people. Consider this nation, oh God.

And he said, the Lord answers Moses in verse 14, says, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give you rest. I will go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest. Moses, just walk with me, just like you saw me at the river when I parted it.

Just behold me, and my presence will give you rest. And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. Oh God, if you're not with me, I'm not going.

I don't want to go. I'm not interested in hearing about you. I want to walk with you.

If you're not with me, I don't want to go. I don't want to sit in the church that gives me steps to Christian living and sends me out the door, what was step one again? What was step two? What was step three to getting along with my wife or to becoming a new person? I don't want to attend a church like that. I want to go to a place where the presence of God is, where I walk out the door with God, the presence of God in my life.

It's not about steps. It's about something that God has spoken into my heart, and his very presence in my life will bring it to pass. It will become a reality.

Moses said, if you don't go, I'm not going. There's got to be something good in your heart. It's got to get in your gut once in a while.

God, I'm not going if you don't go. I'm not going to start in the spirit and end up in the flesh. I don't want to hear messages about you.

I want to know you. I want your presence with me. God said, my presence will go with you, and I'll give you rest.

And he said to him, if thy presence go not with me, don't carry me up. Verse 16, he said, for wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not that you go with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth? Moses said, what makes the difference? If you don't go with us, we just end up with people with theories about God. Those of us who were with us when we went into Nigeria, with a crowd of over 600,000 people gathered who had been killing each other weeks before, many of them armed.

We knew they were armed. They carried weapons into the meeting in case any kind of violence broke out. Strongholds of fear and bankrupt religion tell me what but the presence of God could have made the difference in that kind of a situation.

The governor of Nigeria came here and had lunch with me a few weeks ago, and he said, I want to tell you, the whole area has changed. The churches have a vision. There's no violence between Islam and Christianity right now.

He said, it's made my area so easy to govern. He said, pray for me that I might be real. We stood on this platform.

He said, would you please put your hands on me, pray for me that I might be reelected and that I might live my life for Jesus Christ. The annoying thing was to bring God's people into places of strongholds and to see the strongholds broken. In October, we're going into Jamaica.

We're going to be holding crusades in only one place, a town called Trenchtown, Jamaica. The worst place in the entire country. 200,000 of the most impoverished and depressed people in Jamaica.

The pastors told us if there's not a revival in Trenchtown, Jamaica will never be changed. Trenchtown is divided into four quadrants. They're controlled by drug lords.

There's a common area, a field in the middle called No Man's Land, and the only time people come out there is to fight and to kill one another. This is where we're setting up and having our crusade in No Man's Land in Trenchtown. But I want to ask you a question.

Is it an argument that will change the day or the presence of God? The presence of God. If we don't have the presence of God, we are in danger and we have nothing to say. It's not a message about Christ that will transform this area.

It is Christ, the presence of Christ. And I've said to God, I don't, I'm not going to go if you don't go with us. I don't want to go if you're not with us.

And then God came. I'm going over this morning, I know this, but I have to say all of this. Please bear with me today.

And the Lord came to Moses, verse 17, and he said, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken. One man turned God from taking his presence away from his people. One man interceded and God said, I will, I will keep my presence among my people because you've asked me to.

For you found grace, thou has found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. God said, I will do it. But I know thee by name.

In the Greek, in Hebrew rather, it means character. In other words, I will do it, he said, because I know that you desire me. I know your character.

I know Moses, these are not empty words. You're not doing this just for a religious thing. I know your character, so I will go with you.

I know you desire me. I will go with you and my presence will make you different from all the people on the earth. And this is really the bottom line of everything that God's given me to preach today.

He said, if you will seek me, if you have an honest heart, I'll go with you. It doesn't matter what kind of a struggle you're in right now. God said, if you have an honest heart, if you want to walk with me, I'll walk with you.

If you are interested in me being God to you, I will be God to you. I will walk with you. I'll set you free from all of your obsessions.

I'll set you free from your bondages. I'll do the miraculous in you, but walk with me. Walk with me.

Keep walking with me. Don't turn back. He said, if anyone draw back, my soul will have no pleasure in you.

Keep going forward. I will break chains. I will take you into places you can't go.

I will make you what you could never be. You will have my abiding presence in your life, on the job, in your home, in the ministry I've entrusted to you. My abiding presence will be with you all the days of your life.

He said, Moses, I will do this because I know you desire me. My other call is simple today. Please hear this.

It's for everyone here to say, Pastor, I am, I'm being stirred now by the Holy Spirit. I've settled into something, and I'm desiring to live in a place that I shouldn't be living in. But I feel the Spirit of God calling me, and I want God's presence.

I'm not willing to trade his presence for a message about him. I want his presence. And even if you're struggling with besetting sin in your life, or you feel like you've failed, God says, I know your heart.

If you have an honest heart, I'll go with you. And you will walk out the door, and you'll begin to live in the miraculous. I'll make a promise.

I feel in my heart there's a promise from the Lord to everyone who'd have an honest heart today. God says, I will, I will cause you to walk in the miraculous, and you will know me. I'll cause you.

I will put in you what you don't have. You will know. You're not going to have to guess.

You will know. There'll be an abiding presence of God in your life that will change you and mark you from all the religious around you. It's different because you'll have my presence.

You'll not be bringing to people around you a message about me only, but you'll be bringing my presence with you. I will go with you. When you speak, there'll be authority in your mouth.

When you tell prison doors to open, they will open. And blinded eyes to see, they will see. There'll be a glory on you, because I've ordained you for this purpose.

Now, I know the Holy Spirit is here, and I know he's speaking to many. Now, I'm going to ask if God is speaking to your heart as he's been speaking to mine this week, then unashamedly, you just slip out of your seat in a moment, make your way to this altar. In the annex, you can go between the screens.

We're going to pray for ourselves today. We're going to pray, God, come with us. Keep us.

Let's all stand together. The Holy Spirit speaking to you, would you slip out? Come and meet me here. We'll pray together, and we're going to believe God.

If you're lost in your sin, you come out. The Lord will save you. God will keep you.

Lord, we want you to go with us. God, we believe that you have ordained this church for a purpose. We don't want to fall short of the purpose that you have for us as a church body, and we don't want to fall short of what you have for our lives individually.

Lord, we ask you for you to manifest your glory in our homes, our lives, and our families, our workplaces, and everywhere that you call us to go. We ask, Lord, that you go with us. You said that you would have a people, and through them you'd be blessed in all the earth, and you'd be a blessing through them to the peoples, the nations of the world.

We ask you, Holy Spirit, to come and manifest the glory of Jesus Christ in us and through us. Walk with us, O God. We ask you to look at our hearts, and I know many today can say, Lord, our hearts are sincere.

We want to walk with you no matter what the path. Wherever you take us, whatever we have to do, we want to walk with you. Whatever your calling is, we want to see it fulfilled.

We're not interested in making a false god for ourselves. We want the true Christ of heaven. We ask your Lord to be honored in us.

Pray with me now. Jesus, Son of God, I come to you outside the camp. I open the door.

I ask you, come into my life and be my Savior and be the Lord of my life. Walk with me. Guide me.

Change me. Let me live in the miraculous. Use my life for your glory.

Give me the power. Give me the sense never to draw back, but always to move forward, letting you use my life for your purposes and for your glory. I will serve no foreign god nor any other treasure Jesus.

It's you, and it's you alone will be Lord of my life. I thank you today for the knowledge that as I open my heart to you, you will go with me. We will walk together in wonderful fellowship.

As I behold you, my enemies will melt away. An impossibility will become possible. You will make a way for me.

You will be glorified in my life and through my life. Thank you, God. Look at my heart.

I am sincere in my prayer to you. By your grace and your grace alone, I will never draw back, but I will allow you to lead me, to mold me, and to take me into the very center of your will for my life. I ask for the power to be a seeker of God all the days of my life, to be found in your presence, dwelling in your house.

I ask you, Lord Jesus, to manifest your glory to me and through me. Walk with me all my days. Let my children see it.

Let my family see it. Let my nation see it. God, let the whole world see it, that you are with me and you will walk with me all of my days.

This is the only thing that makes my life any different from the world around me. Jesus, be God to me. Be God to me.

Be God to me. Be God to me. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Now, I want to pray for this church. Now, Father, I'm asking you today, God, that you keep this a holy place. I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to banish casual seeking of Christ from this house.

Let this house always be a confrontation with truth. Manifest your presence here, Lord God. Forgive us.

Forgive me, God. Forgive this house for where we have grieved you. We sin against you in our own ignorance every day, but God, you are full of mercy.

We come to you. We hear your voice saying you will walk with us because our hearts are right in this. We want your presence, Lord, in this house.

We want your glory to always abide here. Lord, we thank you, God. We thank you.

We thank you for the multitudes who have been converted before we've even sung a song. We thank you for tears that have flown for years now, even when there's nobody here. God, thank you for visitors who have come here and just sat down and wept because your presence has abided here.

God, we thank you for it. We ask this would continue. Your presence would continue in even greater measure in the coming days.

We thank you for the past, but it's over. We live in another day. Oh, God, we have to go into tomorrow and we need your presence even more than the days before.

We ask you to walk with us. Precious Christ, walk with us. Holy Spirit, manifest the glory of God here when we meet at all times.

And Father, thank you that we don't leave the glory of Christ in this house. We take you home with us. You walk home with us, God, into our situation.

Mighty God, we thank you in Jesus mighty name. Amen and amen. Hallelujah.

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