

DYING TO GLORIFY GOD

by Carter Conlon

John 17:1-5: *"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."*

■ THE INWARD CRY

"Be glorified in me, Father," Jesus had said. The scriptures show us that the time had come for Christ Jesus to glorify the Father through his death

**WE ARE
BECOMING
REFLECTORS
OF HIS GLORY?**

and subsequent resurrection. The cry of the Son of God was, *"Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."* The word "glory" in the original text is *doxa*, the emphasis being on that which attracts, making the object described significant or prominent. I am convinced this same cry is in the heart of those who have Christ living within, the cry to glorify the Father through death and resurrection—having an inward radiance that reflects Christ, the One who is the radiance and exact representation of the Father's glory (Hebrews 1:3).

This is a powerful message to the New Testament Christian! It speaks of what God destined us to be in Christ before the foundation of the world. By the Spirit, we are being transformed into his image, (2 Corinthians 3:18); we are becoming reflectors of his glory, and lights in this world, attracting and drawing many people to Christ. This is an amazing thought! You are not just a happenstance, but you were in the mind of God before the creation of the world. He knew you by name, where you would be born, where you would live, and he knew you would be reading this message today! You have been called, uniquely fashioned by God, and set apart for his divine purpose. Even before time, we were created in God's own image to be channels of his glory, the expression and radiance of the person and character of Christ. I believe there is an inward cry in every true Christian, "Jesus, be glorified in my life. Let me finish the work you have given me to do on this earth."

■ DIVINE PURPOSE

Jesus Christ himself is the Firstborn from the dead, and I am raised from the dead in him. What a glorious salvation! I am not hoping to have it someday, I have eternal life now, and his life is in me now. Yes, of course, I am in a body that is going to perish, but one day even this body is going to be changed by the indwelling Spirit of God. Until the day he takes us home, you and I have been left on this earth for a divine purpose. Whatever it is Jesus wills to do through our lives, he must receive all the glory! There is a song the

church sang years ago: "Father, glorify Thyself. Father, glorify Thyself in me, whether in pleasure or in pain, over my life I give you reign. Father, glorify Thyself in me." Let this be the prayer of our hearts: "Lord, let your will be done in and through my life. Lead me on the pathway of your choosing, and complete the work you started in me. Help me, by your Spirit's power, to take dominion over this flesh, which is so alienated from the mind of God, and desires its own way. It does not want to conform, or glorify Christ." The true cry of every believer has to be, "Jesus, be glorified in me."

■ THE THIEF COMES TO STEAL

If you are a Christian, there is a desire planted in your heart by the Lord to glorify his Name. The devil will come against you with everything he has to steal it from your heart. He knows when God's people are set apart and their lives radiate Jesus Christ because things around them begin to change. Families are converted to the Lord, whole communities change, and at times even countries experience revival. It takes one person to say, "God Almighty, glorify yourself in me; guide me, lead me; take me wherever you want me to go, and let my life be an expression of who you are." We don't always understand where he is leading us, or how we are going to get there, but all we have to do is walk moment by moment with Jesus. He knows the way, and we need only to love and trust him with all our heart, and have the inward cry, "Be glorified in my life, Lord Jesus."

■ A JOURNEY IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Matthew 3:16: “*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” This verse of scripture talks about the beginning of Jesus’ earthly public ministry. I want us to look at this journey, beginning from his baptism, the descending of the Holy Spirit, the voice from heaven, and lastly, the wilderness experience. As we consider these different aspects, I believe we will learn some valuable lessons as we identify with the earthly ministry of the Son of God.

MANY ARE LED ASTRAY BY SELF-INDULGENT TEACHING

■ WATER BAPTISM

Jesus’ baptism was a powerful reenactment of what was to take place in our lives through the cross. Many of us have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and have taken this journey into the waters of baptism. Baptism by immersion means death to my old way of living and death to my own value system. I am dying to my old desires and self-will, my stubbornness, and rejection to the will of God. I am coming up out of the water, believing that as Jesus was raised from the dead and lives forevermore, so now I too am walking in that same newness of life.

■ ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT

Then the scripture says, “*The Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove.*” It was necessary for the Son of Man to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit before beginning his ministry (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18). He gave

his disciples specific instructions to wait in Jerusalem until they too had been “endued with power from on high.” In reaching a lost and dying world, it is not by our own might, programs, schemes, or power that we bring lost souls to salvation. It is by the same Holy Spirit power that Jesus received and that also came upon the disciples at Pentecost; it is the same Holy Spirit who is now sending us as he sent them forth to glorify and uplift the lovely Name of Jesus Christ.

■ ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED

As Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism, the heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and a voice came from heaven: “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” Likewise, we have come out of the water, received the Holy Ghost, and now we too have this deep inner knowledge that we are pleasing in the sight of God since we are accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). You may not have it all together now; you may have a long way to go, but you have this inward knowledge: “I am in Christ, and he is in me. I have started a new life, the heavens are opened, the Spirit of God is upon me, and I am pleasing in the sight of my God.” There is an inner cry, “O, God, use me for your glory.”

■ LED INTO THE WILDERNESS

As we consider the experience of Jesus at his baptism, we see the Holy Spirit descending, and a voice from heaven saying, “This is my Son, My beloved, in whom I delight!” Surely it doesn’t get any better than that! Surely Jesus would move right from there to a place of ruling and reigning on a throne, right? But that is not the way it was to be. Matthew 4:1: “*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.*” After his wonderful experience at baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan! The evil one was out to tamper with Jesus’ pursuit to

live an obedient life that glorified his Father. The devil knew his kingdom would be in jeopardy if he could not turn the Christ away from his single pursuit to glorify his Father’s Name.

■ FIRST TEMPTATION

In Matthew 4:3, Satan came to Jesus and said, “*If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*” Satan uses this same temptation today—he knows God is not glorified in a ministry that focuses on its own provision! There are people and ministries today whose primary focus is their own provision; they look for ways to “turn stones into bread.” It is easy on the flesh to avoid the hard places in life—the wilderness and prison experiences where the sufferings of Christ are experienced. Many are led astray by this type of self-indulgent teaching which does not portray the gospel or the glory of Christ. Even the unsaved instinctively know this is not the true gospel! The greedy are drawn in, but the honest seekers know this doctrine cannot be true of the Christ who bore his cross!

■ SECOND TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:8: “*...The devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.*” Again, Satan uses this same tactic to tempt God’s people. He knows the Lord is not glorified by those who lust for position and power. Satan had firsthand knowledge of this; in his pride he lusted after God’s position and desired to be worshiped. The Almighty cast him out of heaven, together with one third of the angels who had joined in the rebellion. There are many Christians today lusting for position and power, striving to climb the “ladder of success and fame” and doing it all in the name of Jesus Christ. The evil one gloats, because he knows this fleshly type of ministry will bring nothing but shame to the Name of the Lord.

■ THIRD TEMPTATION

In Matthew 4: 5 and 6, we read that Satan took Jesus, set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said, “...*Cast yourself down: for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*” Satan’s scheme is for God’s people to be led by impulsiveness and presumption, which will not glorify the Lord. For an example, there are people or ministries who make decisions and have scripture to back them up, yet are not led by the Spirit. Some even use scripture to justify building magnificent edifices costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, and then later they walk away from it all, leaving only debt behind them. In one sense, it is like casting yourself off the pinnacle of the temple and saying, “God, if I do this, if I find a scripture and just act on it, you will have to validate your Word and catch me before I hit the bottom.” Not so! The Lord is not glorified by impulsive Christianity. He is glorified by those who follow his voice, by those who follow only his leading.

■ OUR WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

It is in the wilderness that the core values of your Christian life will be formed, not on a mountaintop. It is often in a place outside of the public eye, a place known only to you and the Lord. This wilderness experience is not something the devil has brought into your life, it is a God-given wilderness and the Spirit of God has led you there! Just as Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the evil one, so you also will be tempted. What happens there will determine whether or not you and I will glorify Jesus Christ. It is in the wilderness, this hidden walk, that godly character is formed, and we emerge changed, and ready to be used by him. Some people run from it, and lose out on the opportunity to bring glory to the Lord.

■ CONSIDER THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The “wilderness experience” was a preparation time for the children of Israel before they inherited the blessings of Canaan. It was a time of intimacy, a time of depending on the Lord for provision, daily guidance, and victory over the enemy. A time of perseverance and faith; a time of looking beyond the present circumstances, and trusting God for the future, considering him faithful who had promised! It is a people who say, “Yes, Lord, I don’t want my own way, but I want to live by every word that proceeds from your mouth! I surrender my will and my plans for the future. Take my life, and lead me in the path you have chosen for me, and above all, may Jesus Christ be glorified in and through my life!”

■ CONSIDER THE APOSTLE PAUL

Paul’s journey as a Christian was fraught with persecution, suffering and pain, leading him to his final destination as a prisoner in Rome. This prison was the place ordained by the Lord, where Paul would write numerous epistles, many of which we have in our hands today. Agabus and other well-meaning Christians along the way tried to dissuade him. Agabus took Paul’s girdle and bound his own hands and feet saying, “So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.” In other words, “Paul, think of the good that can come from your life if you just circumvent this trip to Jerusalem. Why do you have to do this?” But Paul’s deep inner conviction was, “To die is gain,” and although he was referring to physical death, yet it was also a dying to the preservation of self in order to follow and obey the voice of the Lord. His desire was for the will of God to be done in and through his life, no matter what the cost. He said, “I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” You witness the

Lord Jesus being glorified through the surrendered life and ministry of a man who was about to be thrown into prison!

■ GLORIFYING THE LORD THROUGH CONTENTMENT

1 Timothy 6:6,7: “*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*” I have seen more Christians destroyed by ambition than any other sin—by those who are discontented, pushing and jockeying for some new thing, some new position. However, there is something very attractive about a contented person! It touches my heart to come in to church every week, and see men with a bottle of Windex, wiping and cleaning the glass pulpit. This is their ministry. They may never preach behind that pulpit, but they are content to clean it! When I see this, a cry goes up from my heart, “God, please let me be as contented as these men in everything that I am called to do.” This grace does not happen overnight, but through daily abiding in Christ, our All-Sufficient One. It is learning to be content, not only with the talents he has given me, but with wherever he has placed me in the body of Christ. It is all level ground at the cross; it

**LOOKING BEYOND
THE PRESENT
CIRCUMSTANCES
AND TRUSTING GOD
FOR THE FUTURE**

is not just about what we do, but that we are serving in obedience to what God has called us to do. It is incredible when the revelation finally hits: This is how we glorify God. We rest in him; we yield our all, and allow his life to radiate through us wherever we go. When we learn to live in the truth that Jesus Christ is our reason for being, and he alone can satisfy,

everything else will fall into place in a joy-filled life empowered by the Spirit. This is the life that brings glory to Christ! The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:11, “...*For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*”

■ WE TOO CAN WALK IN THIS SAME GRACE

Dear friend, this grace to live that life which glorifies Christ does not happen overnight, but as we daily abide in our All-Sufficient One, we too can say, “I have learned to be content wherever he has placed me, be it in the choir, in my marriage, with my children, or at my place of employment. I have learned to be content with the talents I have received, and with the voice he has given me.” As we learn to live in the truth that Jesus Christ is our reason for being, and he alone can fill all our emptiness, then everything else falls into place in a wonderful life empowered by God’s Spirit. It is in this kind of life that he alone receives the glory!

■ THE SURRENDERED HEART

The Lord Jesus said to the Apostle Peter in John 21:18, 19, “...*When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will direct you and take you where you don’t want to go.*” Jesus said this to let him know what kind of death he would die to glorify God.

The questions we need to ask ourselves are, “By what death may we glorify God this day? What is he asking me to lay down? What quarrel, what bitterness, what ambition? What future plans of my own reasoning?” God’s plan and destiny for you might actually be Africa, but your plan is to be head of a company on Wall Street! Your destiny could be

to die on the mission field in five years and you are resisting all the way. Yet your heart cries out, “Lord, why is it that you are not being glorified in my life?” He is not glorified because you refuse to stretch out your hands and die!

What secret desire do you need to take to the cross? What unfulfilled longing or secret sin is robbing you of the glory of God? Jesus taught that it is the things we give up for him that we get to keep!

John 12:23-26: “*And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*” The corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies brings forth much fruit! Our excuse so often is, “God knows I am just human,” but the excuses, together with our own ambitions, must die! The cry of the Spirit is, “Just stretch out your hands—yield it all to me, and let me be glorified in you.” I believe that the response of the heart must be one of faith that says, “Jesus, I surrender all to you, be glorified in me.”

Carter Conlon
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REV. CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor at Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

Founding Pastor

Rev. David Wilkerson

Senior Pastor

Rev. Carter Conlon

Tel:

212-541-6300

Fax:

212-541-6415

Church Location:

237 West 51st Street,
Between Broadway & Eighth Avenue

Mailing Address:

1657 Broadway, 4th Flr.
New York, NY 10019

e-mail:

info@timessquarechurch.org

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

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