

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH



The Good Stuff Happens on the Other Side

Pastor Tim Dilena

When people ask what we're doing at Times Square Church, the answer is that **we're believing for 1 billion souls!**

Hudson Taylor said, "There are three things stages in the work of God: impossible, difficult, done."

First, let's talk about the impossible and the difficult. Although they're not popular subjects, I believe that together, later this year, we will celebrate what may have seemed impossible, but is actually only difficult, and call it done, in Jesus' name!

I once spoke at a university in Minnesota, and during lunch, one of the vice presidents gave me a piece of Greek prose that has stuck with me to this day. I can't quite recall why he shared it with me, but I've referred to it countless times in my life when I've needed to push beyond my limits. The prose is called "Come to the Edge." It goes like this:

He said, "Come to the edge."

They said, "We can't."

He said, "Come to the edge."

They said, "We're afraid."

He said, "Come to the edge."

And so they came.

And he pushed them.

And they flew.

Jesus could always get a crowd to come and hear Him at His gatherings. In Matthew 8, Jesus challenged the crowd when He asked them to take a step from listening to the sermon and seeing miracles to taking flight. In verse 18, Jesus gave orders to the crowd to depart to the other side of the sea. He was calling them to the edge. Everyone was fine with Jesus until He started giving orders and wanting to push them. **He was calling them to step out of their comfort zone and follow Him to the edge.** However, people were not willing to follow Him when it required them to step out of their comfort zone and take risks. When it came time for pushing, look who was at the edge: "When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him" (Matthew 8:23). When the dust settles *only disciples follow to the edge*. Take special note that crowds gather to listen; disciples follow to fly!

“ Everyone was fine with Jesus until He started giving orders and wanting to push them. ”

Although it's a powerful message, it's not always easy to put into practice. Even Jesus, who could always attract a crowd, struggled

to get people to follow Him to the edge. **Before the boat took off, there were others who were considering whether to become disciples or remain part of the crowd.** One person needed more information before going to the edge, while two people were deliberating between being part of the crowd or becoming disciples. Their conversation is recorded in Matthew 8:19–22.

In this passage, a scribe said he would follow Jesus wherever He went, but Jesus warned him that following Him would require sacrifice. Another disciple asked to first go and bury his father, but Jesus said, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” Housing issues and funeral plans needed to be addressed before getting in the boat. Jesus is saying there are no guarantees of comfortability, and dead things should be handled by dead people.

As a follower of Jesus, you have to surrender to the notion that you will be comfortable from this day on. That can be difficult for Americans. We call a recliner a “La-Z-Boy,” not a “Risky-Boy.” C. S. Lewis said, “If you want a religion that makes you comfortable, I don’t recommend Christianity.”

Today is a call away from listening and go to the other side because the good stuff happens on the other side.

In 1982, Steve Jobs asked John Sculley, the president of Pepsi, to become Apple’s CEO. Because Apple wasn’t the well-known company it is today, Sculley was hesitant to accept. John Sculley was being forced to leave the La-Z-Boy and go to the other side. So he played hard to get. Jobs, not to be deterred, countered with this question: “Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling

sugared water, or do you want a chance to change the world?” Jobs’ brutal honesty convinced Sculley to accept the offer; and at the age of 44, he became Apple’s Chief Executive.

The good stuff happened to him on the other side. Apple is the most profitable American company in the world today. It needed people to go from impossible to difficult and we now see done.

Let’s look at the “follow” part where only disciples go.

When God calls you away from the crowd, it may seem like a minefield, but miracles are on the way. When you follow Jesus, you get storms and you get miracles.

“ **They missed Jesus’ miracles because they wouldn’t get in a boat** ”

Jesus’ “cruise line” is not going to be the Icon of the Seas. When we think of boats we think of buffets and magnificent ports of call. The disciples on the boat, however, were about to face a huge storm and two demon-possessed guys. He was about to perform two incredible miracles in 4 words. He would say, “*Peace be still*” to nature; and then, “*Begone*” to demons.

But to be part of the miracles you are going to have to go through the storm. You have to choose not to play it safe to experience what God has. It can start with lifting a hand to be born again, showing up at church to pray, or coming down to be prayed for. But you have to come to the edge to experience miracles or you’ll live a life that is safe and uneventful.

Mark Twain said, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

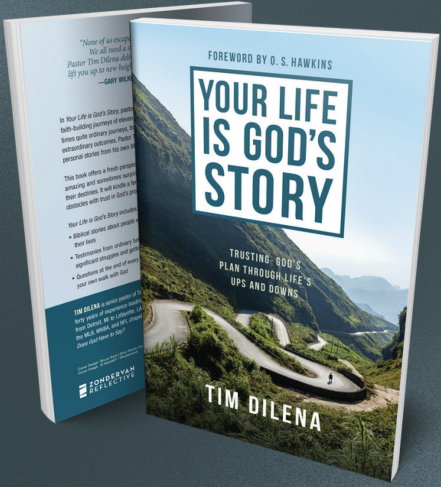
The crowds heard Jesus’ sermons, but they missed Jesus’ miracles because they wouldn’t get in a boat. I’m getting into a boat. Will you come with me? I’m inviting you to go to the other side. **I invite you to come to the edge in serving... in praying... in giving.** Everyone, including those around the world, let’s get into the boat and experience the miraculous!

In Habakkuk 1:2–5, the prophet is looking at iniquity and wickedness, destruction and violence, strife and contention, perverted justice, and how the wicked surround the righteous. Habakkuk is talking but not moving because of what he is looking at. He saw storms, but God had to refocus him and call him to the edge.


God is speaking to us in these verses. God says you are looking in the wrong place. You see so small. You see the problems. In verse 5 he said it like this, “Look among the nations! Observe!

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Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days..."

More than a quarter of the world's population live in a group without a self-sustaining gospel movement. The ten largest unreached people groups are located in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Algeria. We found out that in 2023 Times Square Church was watched in 187 of the 193 countries in the world! Reaching these unreached groups is one of our goals for 2024.

Rest assured that there will be storms where we are going as a church in 2024, but we can either question all the bad stuff happening and live on the defensive or go to the edge and the other side of the sea and look to what God is going to do in our days.

We at Times Square Church echo the 3 words that God spoke to Habakkuk: **Observe... Be Astonished... Wonder.**

We **observe** what is going on around us. Something is coming to America and to our city. We are getting our church ready. As we stand for righteousness people will rise up against us. As we point people to Christ and not to a candidate in 2024, the political church will rise up against us. Don't look to DC, look to the nations!

We are **astonished** by what God has done and we are grateful for all that was accomplished in 2023: We wanted to raise 1 million dollars—you gave \$1.3 million! We spent \$986K for Summit School of Ministry; YouTube (25 million views), 4 language channels released (Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, and Chinese); prison outreach; and technology updates. There were other things we were also able to get done: Security update; an original production of a film on mental illness; a prayer meeting at Yale University (700 individuals showed up); and the release of the book, "Biblical Worldview A-Z."

Lastly, I believe that we will look in **wonder** at what God is going to do! In his book, "The Journey Home", Bill Bright wrote, "Set goals so big that unless God helps you, you will be a miserable failure."

Our vision is 1 billion souls. We must go through the storm to get to the miracles.

"Your ears will hear a word behind you, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right or to the left" (Isaiah 30:21).

It's a picture of moving forward and God confirming this is the way to keep going, don't veer off. I want to hear the voice behind me saying this is the way.

Because you gave in 2023, we were able to:

- Launch broadcasting Times Square Church on Channel 9 in the Greater NY area, to 8 million people.
- Produce 2 books, one on prayer, will be released in the Fall.
- Start a 10-Part Series, "Because You Prayed," last month.

OUR 2024 VISION ASK

\$500K Summit School of Ministry which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Dr. Teresa Conlon is training young people from all over the world.

\$100K Prayer meetings at Ivy League schools (UPenn, Harvard, MIT)—God is opening up doors for Pr. Carter.

\$250K YouTube Channels—We are going to translate 6 more languages (French, Portuguese, Hebrew and, hopefully, Russian and some other languages).

\$250K Tech Upgrade

\$100K United Nations Project

\$100K Israel filming and NYE

\$100K Thanksgiving Project to feed 5,000 on 51st Street

\$100K Security optimization

\$500K LED marquis on 51st & Broadway—Customarily, on Saturday nights, I walk around the block praying for protection for the members and the church building. Two weeks ago, as I was outside praying, I listened to a couple who said, "I had no idea this was a church." We have to change that! I conferred with someone who told me that advertising in Times Square costs \$250K a month. We have an opportunity to do it on our Broadway billboard and light boxes at no additional monthly cost.

All of this equals 2 Million dollars!

We challenge you more and more to pray as a church: Sundays at the altar; Tuesday nights at 6PM; Wednesday nights; join us for prayer and fasting.

ACTION STEP

When discussing our vision and finances, let's keep in mind that the ultimate goal is to impact a billion lives. The funds raised are not for personal gain. Those who attend Times Square Church in person, or online around the country and the world, I am asking you to give. This is not your tithe—this is an offering.

We are inviting you to get in the boat... to come to the edge... to cross to the other side. Good stuff happens on the other side!

2024 VISION FUND

**Give now
to reach
1 billion souls.**



Bishop Tom Madden Visits Summit During Prayer and Fasting



Recently, the staff and students at Summit participated in Times Square Church's prayer and fasting event, culminating at the worldwide prayer meeting held on our campus. During those few days, as our busy moments paused, there was a sensitivity and awareness of the Holy Spirit that impacted us in a profound way.

During the second day of the prayer event, Bishop Tom Madden came to visit Summit, urging and encouraging students to lean into the presence of God and to fully comprehend the moment we are living in. Bishop Madden serves as the overseer of 260 churches in the State of Georgia, and he continues to have a burden for this next generation. He exhorted those who gathered in the chapel "God knows who you are, and he knows where he wants to take you. People will give you advice and tell you what you need to do, but when you know the Holy Spirit and the voice of the Holy Spirit in your life, He can raise you up in a moment to turn the land upside down for the gospel. He has a plan and a purpose for your life."

Bishop Madden explored the story of Zacchaeus from Luke chapter 19, illustrating how Zacchaeus, by repositioning himself high in a tree, sought to see all of Jesus. "It's going to take ordinary people like us... Do you want to make a difference in the world? Reposition yourself to see all of Jesus. Reposition yourself to

hear the Holy Spirit." He stressed the importance of recognizing Kairos moments within chronological time, asserting that we are currently living in a unique Kairos moment in history—a time where God promises to pour out His Holy Spirit on each of us.

Pastor Tim Dilena, our Senior Pastor, has been speaking messages in the same vein this year. It's time to let the Holy Spirit move in our lives in an even deeper way. God is doing something special at Summit, and we are blessed to be the direct beneficiaries of those who are determined to light a fire under those who want all that God has for them.



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