

# The Spirit of Christ in Times of War

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**NOTE: THIS SERMON WAS PREACHED BY WALTER WANGERIN, JR., AT THE PRAISE GATHERING IN INDIANAPOLIS ON OCTOBER 13, 2001—ONE MONTH AND TWO DAYS AFTER THE ATTACKS ON THE WORLD TRADE CENTER AND THE PENTAGON, AND SIX DAYS AFTER THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DROPPED ITS FIRST BOMBS ON AFGHANISTAN.**

The Gospel according to Luke:

*They brought to Jesus the colt that had never been ridden; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road; and as he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice.*

I am reading the same story as it is told in the Gospel according to Matthew:

**A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed were shouting: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

*As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying...*

**“Jerusalem, Jerusalem...”**

*“If you only knew—even you, on this very day—oh, if only you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. And the days will come when your enemies will raise ramparts around you and surround you and hem you in on every side. They will not leave one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”*

**“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those that are sent unto you! How often have I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate! For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”**

*“They will not leave one stone upon another in you!”*

**Later, when Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us: when will the stones of the temple be**

**thrown down to the ground? And what will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age?” Jesus answered them, “Beware that no one leads you astray, for many will come in my name saying, ‘I am the Christ!’”**

*“They will say, ‘The time is near.’ Do not go after them!”*

**“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.”**

*“Of wars and insurrections...”*

**“But don’t be alarmed.”**

*“Do not be terrified! For these things must take place first.”*

**“But the end is not yet.”**

*“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be dreadful portents.”*

**“Yet all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.”**

*“This will give you the opportunity to testify.”*

And how, when that opportunity comes, does Jesus say we should respond? We read the answer in the Gospel according to Mark:

*“When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. It shall not be you who speak, but the Holy Spirit, who shall speak through you.”*

O Christ, wherever you are right now grant me the grace to be there with you. O Christ, on whatever Mount you are standing now—Mount Olives, Mount Rushmore, Mount Ararat—grant me the wisdom to be standing there beside you. O sweet Lord Jesus Christ, wherever you are looking down upon the cities, the cities destroyed and destroying; wherever you are looking down upon the people, the people destroyed and destroying; wherever you are weeping for all of these, grant me the courage, O Christ, to be there weeping with you. Amen.

Oh, my sisters and my brothers, we have in the last while soared. The musicians and the voices and the singers, the directors and the banners have all allowed us to soar somewhere near that throne to the right hand of which sits Christ. But I am not going to help us soar much right now. We have come to adore him. We have seen him as the innocent infant child in the crib, and we wept our tears of complete and absolute love for this child who has come into the world to be like us, to live like us, to go down like us. But it is not that Jesus unto which I am going to bring us now.

My mothers and my fathers among you, my little children, sons and daughters: Oh, my family, I beg now of you just that you would give me your solemn and listening ears, for I must unfold a thing unto you which I am afraid I may not be strong enough to say clearly all by myself. I am afraid that I am a

little weak for the thing that God would have me tell you. Therefore, I beg that you bear half of this communication, please. Attend unto this word. And, in spite of my weakness, be the strength that Jesus gives us all to say the things that always are not easy to say—or to be heard.

The time that we have just entered—as a people and as a world—in the last month and in the last weeks, has finally become like the time in which Jesus lived his life. Did you know that? For the most part, the lives that we have lived in this country have been different from the life that Jesus lived. The politics of Jesus's age did not allow for the security and the comfort that many of us have had, or for the prosperity and the presumption that when we went to bed at night we would awake in the morning. But now we are where Jesus was in terms of politics, in terms of religious fanaticism, in terms of the way the peoples of the world related to one another or did not. We are now where Jesus was which gives us an extraordinary opportunity to ask the question: What did Jesus do under these circumstances? What did our Lord Christ do under circumstances exactly like these? Will we have the grace and the wisdom and the courage likewise to stand with our Lord Jesus in these times?

Listen: Once upon a time, years and years ago—two millennia ago—there was a superpower in the world—only one superpower. It was such a superpower that it affected the peoples in the far-flung areas: the Middle East, Africa, rough Europe, even all the way to Asia. It affected them without their even being aware (as they lived in the major cities of this superpower), without their even being aware of how it affected them. Rome just was. And Rome was, as it was, powerful; and its culture went out to all the ends of the earth. People used its economy to get by. People used its means of entertainment to get by—its stadiums and its athletics. People even began to dress as the superpower dressed in order to get by; and Rome, simply by its burly power had the capacity to affect—unconsciously, but nevertheless seriously—the small nations, the little nations, the nations who were filled with the faith of their land. O Judah, Judah, filled with the faith of its God Jahweh and the Messiah to come.

Once upon a time, things were very much like our time today, and under the power—under the presence, the reaching and weighty presence of this superpower—religious people became fanatic. And so in the province of Judea and north of Judea, in the province of Galilee and in the province between, there were Jews who loved the Lord, Jews who were terribly uncomfortable with the pressure of this superpower upon them. Many, if not most, of the Jews in those days would rather love the Lord than love anything of this superpower. They felt stressed because of the pressure on their lives.

Now, I tell you the truth. In that country, there were hills; there were high hills and deep defiles and many caves, and it was hard to get into that country. It was hard for those who literally wanted to come and bring peace to that place, to come and prosecute that peace. There were bandits in those days who hid in the

caves. The Roman governors who were going after those bandits said that they were outlaws, but so many of the people—the common people—who saw these bandits go from cave to cave and make their attacks and suddenly withdraw thought that they were heroes fighting on their side. One of those bandits might very well have been one that we read about in Scripture called Barabbas. Barabbas, who used to give food to the people, having stolen it from the rich ones, was arrested and put into jail.

Oh, and it wasn't only that; among these people there were fanatics. They were grim, vicious fanatics. This is what they said. They said, "No God but God." They said, "No God but the Lord." It was their creed; it was exactly how they spoke. And what they were saying in those days was that anybody among the Jews who traded with the superpower, anybody who traded with the superpower, anybody who mixed their lives up with the superpower (such people as for example, the publicans, the tax collectors—any of these people) was worshiping the wrong god. They were not worshiping the right god. And things got more and more tense.

These zealots (as they were called) so zealous for the Lord God, felt that they had a right to become terrorists; and they did. As terrorists they would kill and you could not find them. The Romans gave them a name; the Romans called them the *Sicarii*. It comes from the Roman word *sicar*, and what it means is a long, very thin blade. It's a knife. These *Sicarii*—these zealots, who lived in Jerusalem, who loved Jerusalem—whenever they saw somebody who was treating with the enemy, somebody that they thought did not come up to snuff in their religion, would hide that knife in their robe and walk along the crowded streets of Jerusalem. When they passed the bad one, they would bring that knife out, gut him, and walk on by without ever stopping so that the poor fellow who just got stabbed would be standing there holding death in his arms and slowly crumpling down to death. But when people realized that death was there—when people realized that somebody had just killed this person, the one who had killed him was gone. He could not be found.

Are you beginning to see the parallels? I'm not stressing them. I'm not stretching them. They just are. I'm afraid that one of the people of Jesus's group who was a zealot—not a *Sicarii* even, not a terrorist, but a zealot nevertheless for God and for the cleansing of the people—could very well have been a disciple of Jesus. And his name? Judas. Judas was a zealot. He had plans for Jesus. He had plans for the Son of God and what this powerful mighty Messiah should do. But they were not Jesus's plans. I must say that again. He had plans for this Messiah, this Jesus Christ. He loved Jesus. He thought that Jesus was the most significant individual walking the earth in those days. He believed that Jesus was the Son of God, this son of David, this fighting Messiah. He had plans. But his plans were not Jesus's plans.

So those were the times. And Jesus saw even farther into those times. He saw when buildings of trade would come down. He saw when the most significant buildings of a city (in his day the temple; in our day symbols whereby we had declared our power and our security) would come down so treacherously that there would not be one stone standing upon the other. I tell you, my sisters and brothers, we have politically entered the time that Jesus lived in and knew. It is appropriate then to ask: And what did Jesus do then?

I am not this morning going to talk about sides and declare one side right or wrong. We can do that. There are good times for doing that. But right now when we focus our eyes upon our Lord Jesus and how he reacted in those days, I am going to ask this question—not which side is right, which side is wrong. I am going to ask this question: What is right to do in these times? What is wrong to do in these times, especially if we name ourselves with the name of Christ and call ourselves Christians?

So I am going to continue this story. I have set the scene. I will continue the story for you, and I want you to watch what Jesus did. I can find in Jesus's developing action five steps or six. Five moves on our Lord Jesus Christ's part. Each one instructive unto us. And six yet to deliver us. So what did Jesus do? Where will we be?

Well, the first thing that the Son of God, our master, did was not to stay in Galilee. Things were more peaceful in Galilee. Even in Samaria they were more peaceful. The first thing that our Lord Jesus did was what I am doing right now; he got on the move—got on the move from all those places where people would hide and be secure and cover themselves or take sides, one side more secure than the other. Jesus got on the move. Jesus started moving, from Galilee, down through Samaria, to Judea, and to Jerusalem. Our Lord's first act was to go to the place the tension was the highest, where it was no secret anymore, where the facts of the times were right there; and for anyone to approach those facts would make them somehow or other be involved. Oh, and I went with him. I am one of those disciples that traveled with Jesus, down from Galilee, into Judea and Jerusalem. I'm one of them. I wish I knew what my name was. I am really hoping that my name is not Judas, that I'm not traveling in high delight and looking forward to what my Christ is going to do in this conflict. I really don't know. My name could be Peter. I wish that my name were perhaps Mary—Mary Magdalene.

The second thing that Jesus did was to enter into the city itself. And by heaven, folks knew he was coming. He had a reputation. He had done the mighty acts of God. And so when he moved from Bethany to the city itself—upon a colt, which no one else had ever ridden before—as Jesus went to the city, a whole lot of people who knew him and loved him, who would like to drape themselves in his name, stood up and started crying: “Yes! Good! We're glad you're here! We know who you are. You are the son of David. You are the son of that warrior king. You are the son of one who fought once and threw the shackles off our back

and gave us a golden country and a golden city. You are the son, the son of the one who was our most profound fighter and king, and you have come to us to restore unto us the kingdom. Hosanna! Blessed is the son of David!” they cried.

And what was Jesus’s second move? What was Jesus’s second act? With so many people around him, and given such approval—such loud approval—he could at that time, of course, had the potency and the power and the wisdom and the strategy to say back unto the people, “I humbly accept what you are giving me here.” He had a very high approval rating, higher than anybody else in the city at that time. No, Jesus walked through all those days, through all the anticipation that he was about to lead them through physical violence to some kind of kingdom that would bless them. Particularly, he walked through it all, and he did not respond to any of it. He did say that it would go on no matter what, because deeper than all these people knew, there was another truth behind it. But they were not at the level of that truth. Deeper, deeper than the truth that he would become the one to restore the kingdom was the truth of what kind of kingdom he was going to restore and how he was going to restore it. The kind of kingdom was the kingdom of God yet to come at the end of the world—at the end of the world. How he was going to restore it was not by a sword that he wielded, but by the sword that he allowed somebody else to wield by which to pierce him.

It does not mean that he did not love. Oh, yes, he loved all those people who waved their palm branches and threw their cloaks on the road in front of him. He knew they would cry out. And on the other hand, he was God, and saw so much more than they did.

What was his third move? He didn’t even enter the city first. Our Lord Jesus Christ stood outside the city where he could look down upon it, and it broke his heart. He wept. Our Lord Jesus Christ at that moment was not a king in glory. He had removed himself from that role. Now he was in the role of a mother (as Gloria Gaither said just a little while ago), as the hen about which you just heard read, weeping because the chicks would not come. Jesus wept. Third act. Jesus wept. Whom did Jesus weep for? He wept for his own people who were in Jerusalem. Jesus wept for those who were zealots. Jesus wept for Judas. Jesus wept for those who were terrorists. Jesus wept for all those who would be troubled by terrorism. Jesus wept for the whole world. Now, as it fetched up (in that intense moment in Jerusalem), what was going to happen in Jerusalem would finally have its impact for the whole world. Jesus wept for the whole world. No distinction. No distinction—no one people, no one nation, no one city was more important than another.

What was the fourth thing that Jesus did? Jesus spoke. He said out loud, where the people could hear, why he was weeping, for whom he was weeping and what could happen that might change the weeping or at least change their circumstances. You heard it read, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children

together (the citizens of that city together) as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”

Now, listen to me. The fact that Jesus was saying it out loud again, right then on Palm Sunday, was a grace; because if anyone could listen to him at that moment with solemn and listening ears, they could at that moment no longer be the ones who refused him but could humble themselves and enter into his wings. In other words, when Jesus spoke those words he was doing what he would do for Judas on Thursday night: he was giving everyone a chance for a choice. “Listen to me,” he said. “Listen to me,” he says today. “Here is the problem. This is why I weep. You refuse me. How often would I have gathered you together. And what did you do? What have you done? What are you doing now? You would not! You would not have this Christ. You would not have this one which is me.” That is how it is said in Matthew. How is it said in Luke? Jesus weeps. And Jesus says, “Oh, if only you knew; if only you knew right now the things that make for peace.” It is a pun, don’t you know, on the name for the city Jerusalem. Jerusalem means city of peace. He is talking to all those people who think that they are dwelling in some kind of an earthly peace. But he cries unto them, “If only you knew the things that make for peace—if only you knew.”

“Listen to me. Listen to me. If only you knew,” he said then, he says now. “It is the time of your visitation, the time when God has come to visit you. If only you knew me right now. If only self-righteousness did not blind you to the things that make for peace. If only self-righteousness did not blind you to me,” says Jesus, “and who I am and why I am and what I am to do here.”

But self-righteousness blinds us—any of us who are filled up with anything besides this Jesus who is calling. If I am among his disciples and my name is Judas, I will think I got it right; but I will not know that I have imposed upon my Jesus my notion of what Jesus should be. I will not know that I have imposed on my Jesus my notion of what my Jesus should be—I, who love the Lord so desperately and therefore I will be blind. I will not see the visitation. I will not accept the humbling quality of a hen covering me.

Well, OK, all right, all right. So what are the things that make for peace? So what is the visitation? So what was Jesus revealing to the people right then? You know. You know. I can tell you, for it is this way today. What are the things that make for peace? Not the Christ that Judas had in mind—not the son of David who fought. What, then? I will tell you simply; you have been singing it all weekend. The visitation of God is a paradox because the Jesus who comes and visits us is first of all the one who stands above all things—*all* things, not just above America, but also above Afghanistan—above *all* things. He looks down upon the whole world, a part of which he was the creator for—him through whose word the world was created. Our Lord Jesus looks down upon all people and makes no distinction among them, but loves them all equally. That is why he cries.

And the paradox is that the thing Jesus was above all—the word that helped to create the world—is also the flesh which is in the world. He who is above all now also is under all; and wherever suffering occurs, that suffering finally finds its home and its ending in Jesus. He also is under all, receiving all the suffering that happens. Any who cry, the tears fall upon the Christ; and any who wail, the wailing comes not only into Jesus's ears, but out of his mouth—he is the one who wails. You know that. Only now you must know it better because we are in it. Oh, the mothers' children who wail, Jesus weeps for them, with them—weeps in compassion. Those who went down when there was not one stone left standing upon another in New York, with them Jesus went down; the profound companion at the bottom, he was walking with them. He was on the stairs. And when they fell and when they cried out, he caught them.

Oh, there is one more thing, however, about where our God is and what this visitation is. We must hear this just as clearly. Whenever there is on this earth conflict; whenever there are separating hatreds; whenever one group of people says of another group, "You are evil", and the other group is able to say back, "No, you are wrong—you are evil;" wherever there are two sides fighting, whether they were the two sides in this country at civil war or now; wherever there are two sides fighting, Jesus does not fetch up on one side or the other, but stands in the middle. He stands in the middle of human hatreds because he who loves all, who suffers and swallows the grief of all, would also catch the slings and arrows and the anger and the sin of all. That is where Jesus is. That is where the visitation is today. He is between the brothers that hate one another. When they raise their guns or drop their bombs and when they fly their planes, the one who is hit first—the one who catches the sin, the hatred, the motive and the coarse self-righteousness and all the personal justification: the one who catches that—is our Lord Jesus Christ. That is where he is. And that, as hard as it may be for us to hear right now, is the beginning of hope. It is the beginning of the highest goodness I have to tell you.

For this now is the fifth move that Jesus made. The fourth was that he became the visitation. This is the fifth: that even today, in this war which we are entering into, Jesus has permitted himself to become the first casualty of all. Jesus has allowed himself to become the primary—the primal—casualty, the most important victim. Oh, yes, go back to his day. Those who misunderstood what sort of Christ he was did only what Jesus permitted. Oh, he did on Thursday night say to Judas, "Listen, guy, you are sticking your little sop in the same little place from where I am taking my little sauce. It's you. I know it's you. I know it is you who are going out to do this thing, and I know you think it is an important thing."

What was Judas going out to do? What was he going out to do? It was political as well as anything else. He was going out to put Jesus into a circumstance where he was sure that Jesus would have to act like a fighter. He

was going to put Jesus in front of the soldiers. And because he was so convinced about what sort of Christ Jesus would be, he was going to force Jesus's hand. If Jesus was malingering—if Jesus was going a little bit slow about showing his powers—what could he do? Judas was going to put him right in front of the Roman soldiers, right in front of the soldiers of the fanatics—in front of both of them—and let them come for him. And Judas was just sure at that moment that the Christ that he expected would rise up and swallow them all down.

Jesus said, “No, this is a problem. You have a problem. This isn't right.” He gave Judas a chance. He gave him a choice. And Judas nevertheless went out and did it. And so Jesus allowed himself to become the first victim, the most primal victim of this war. He allowed the one who misunderstood him to force his hand, to put him into a situation where he was standing both in front of the zealots—in front of the *Sicarii*, in front of those who were the terrorists—and in front of the superpower, in front of Rome. Jesus was forced to stand between the two of them. Instead of doing what the wrong-headed people expected Jesus to do—instead of raising his mighty hand and passing a miracle that would explode the evil and raise the good above all things, instead of that—Jesus broke Judas's heart. He bowed his head. He said, “OK, me first.”

You know that story. Jesus allowed *both* of these forces. That is why I tell you that he stands between. He allowed both of these forces to grab him together in front of the superpowers. He was in front of Pontius Pilate and also in front of those who really loved their God, but twisted their love of God. He was standing in front of the chief priest and the Jews, and together they conspired. Isn't this a marvel! Isn't this a marvel that Jesus now, for the first time, has effected unity on earth—has effected unity between the superpower and the terrorist because they both want him dead.

But that is the way he went. This is our Lord. This is what he is: a Christ. He went—he went to the cross. He became the first one killed. They let Barabbas go and they put *him* on the cross. As the one above all who loves the whole world, he died for that world. As the one below all and unto whom all sufferings, all crying and all empty prayers go, he died into the force of that suffering so that no human being ever need to suffer it to its complete end. He had done it himself. And he, standing between the separating hatreds, allowed all sin to come upon him; and for the salvation of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ died the first, the primal death. He became the most important victim of our war so that all might receive forgiveness. If we are not filled with self-righteousness, it is there for us. He died that no death need be the end—not any death any human person can die on this earth. It is a part of a larger thing: either a part of a larger death or a life yet to come. He died that our wars be put into perspective—that the greatest war on earth is not between human and human. The greatest war on earth is between all the motives and the hatreds that bring about such wars, and

the goodness and the blessings and the love of God. That's perspective. Jesus died: his fifth act.

No one dies alone. No one dies and walks into perfect darkness. But if we have wept with the Lord, we will find the Lord on the other side. He went first. And when he rose—and when our Lord Jesus Christ, three days later rose from the dead—he rose to the right hand of God; and today he cries down the truth of this entire six-step story.

He says, “America, I have forgiven you. Please do not be filled up with yourselves. Please do not blind yourselves to this day of visitation. It is now. America, I have forgiven you all, if only you would see me.” He says, “England, I have forgiven you.” He says, “France, I have forgiven you.” He says, “Germany,” He says, “United European kingdoms, I have forgiven you.” He says, “Afghanistan, I have forgiven you.” He says, “Osama bin Laden, I have forgiven you. If only you knew the things that make for peace. If only you saw me and laid aside all those things with which you fill your own soul.” This is what our Lord says, a comfort for all of us: “I have died in your place.”

Now we come to the problem, my brothers and my sisters. In all your solemn listening this morning, how shall those who don't know the time of their visitation know what *you* know now? As the visitation of God comes, high and low and between all, how shall they find him? How shall they know this remarkable Savior of ours who has the capacity to love all, to suffer with all, and to cleanse the hatreds and the sins of all? How shall they know him? (Are you with me still?) They shall know him because of you. They shall know him because of you. They shall know him because of you—and you. They shall know him because of us, because we are the ones to whom Jesus gives the choice about whether to be cried over. Because we have hearts to see, to understand when Jesus gives the world a choice. When he says, “America, America, how often would I have gathered you,” when he gives us the choice, we are the ones who have the grace to go where the Lord Jesus was. We are the ones who have the holy wisdom to stand where Jesus stood above all looking upon all the cities. We are the ones—O, God, I hope we are the ones—who have the courage to sit beside Jesus and weep. For if you today have this astonishing capacity to weep for *all* people without dividing them between good and bad—I will say this again, for if you have this astonishing capacity today to weep for all people, with sorrow for all people, to find in Jesus Christ the capacity to become loving of all people—then somebody next door to you is going to say, “What is the matter with you, eh?” And if you have the capacity at the same time to realize that this war is not the end of all wars, that this is only one upon the cosmic scale; if you who weep also paradoxically walk unafraid, as Jesus said, without terror; if because Jesus is the king of all, you are able to walk through all these doors of suffering peacefully, without terror, because you know the things that make for peace; someone, some neighbor is going to look at you and say, “What's the

matter with you? How can you be so happy? How can you be so happy at these times?” So whether it is the tears in you or this enormous faith that lifts you above all this that is going on, somebody is going to say, “What’s the matter with you?” That is what Jesus would say.

When the time comes that they throw down the stones—if we don’t follow the wrong Christ, if we continue to be with Jesus both in compassion and in love and forgiveness and in joy—they will bring us before somebody. They may bring you before some council: it may just be the folks in your neighborhood; or it might be that you are brought before some kind of government; or in your congregation you may be asked to get up and to speak, and you say these things that are completely loving and joyful at once; then they are going to say to you, “What’s with you?” And Jesus says *that* is the time when you shall have an opportunity, “when you shall be able to testify to me, since I am the one who makes for peace. Oh, when the time comes, you who are in the position to testify, don’t worry. Don’t worry. Don’t write long speeches, because the Holy Spirit who breathes through all who know what makes for peace, that Holy Spirit will in that very hour tell you what to say.”

O Christ, I pray for all of the people here, that we might be granted the grace to be with you wherever you are now. Sweet Jesus Christ, I pray for everyone here, wherever you are standing on whatever Mount you are—whether it is the Mount of Olives, or Rushmore, or Ararat—that we be granted the wisdom to stand beside you there looking down upon the cities with tears and with calling. O mighty Jesus, baby in a manger, man walking with a cross, sitting at the right hand of God, I beg for all of us here that we would have the courage, the heart for wherever you are weeping now to weep with you.

You know that I am not preaching this sermon alone, don’t you? Of course you do. You know that whatever I say, I give unto the Lord. It is his Holy Spirit who is telling me what to say right now. Perhaps you ought to know that my dear sister, Gloria Gaither, is preaching with me too. And in a moment you will all be able to preach with me, and the sermon shall not end. It shall go on and on. My Gloria, she wrote this perfect, perfect hymn for a launch at the end of such a talk.

*I then shall live as one who’s been forgiven;  
I’ll walk with joy to know my debts are paid.  
I know my name is clear before my Father;  
I am His child and I am not afraid.  
So greatly pardoned, I’ll forgive my brother;*

“So greatly pardoned,” she writes, “I’ll forgive my brother.” And I know how broad is Gloria’s vision to know where those brothers and sisters are. I know that she knows because listen to this:

*I then shall live as one who’s learned compassion;  
I’ve been so loved that I’ll risk loving, too.*

“I know how...” Now here is where we find out who is Gloria’s and who is mine and who is your brother and sister:

*I know how fear builds walls instead of bridges;*

“I dare to see another’s point...” “I dare to see another’s point of...”

*I dare to see another’s point of view.  
And when relationships demand commitment,  
Then I’ll be there to care and follow through.*

Your Kingdom come around and through and in me, O Jesus Christ—that kingdom of compassion and not of warrior. God, come around and through and with me. O Lord Jesus Christ, let that kingdom come around and through and with us all, that where they ask, “Who are you?” and where they say unto us, “What are you?” we may cry, “We are of God! We are the first fruits. We are the citizens. We are the chicks. We are the small ones. We are those under the wings. We are the Kingdom of God.”

The Scripture Readings are excerpted from the RSV:

Luke 19 & 21  
Matthew 23 & 24  
Mark 13:11

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Walt Wangerin  
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