



This past weekend, we had the pleasure of hearing from Dr. Ben Carson, retired neurosurgeon and politician, who most recently served in the Trump administration as the 17th United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Dr. Carson shared his life story and how he went from a childhood riddled with hardship in inner-city Detroit to head of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital at the age of 33. Revealing an inspiring story of redemption, Dr. Carson shared many of the ways the Lord has worked in him and through him, eventually leading him to leave his medical career to serve our country through politics. In addition to serving with President Trump, he is the founder of the American Cornerstone Institute (ACI). ACI's mission is "dedicated to promoting and preserving individual and religious liberty."

- As a country, we have seen a rapid disintegration in communication across party lines. In the Church, we have also seen believers become more and more hesitant to engage in conversation with those who do not hold the same beliefs, resulting in a generation of Christ followers who have lost their voice.
 - *How can you start to intentionally break down these barriers by openly discussing biblical truth in your sphere of influence?*
- Dr. Carson shared many instances in his life where he had difficulty surrendering his plans to the Lord. We all have a tendency to want to control our circumstances.
 - *What is something that has helped you surrender your plans to the Lord?*
- Dr. Carson shared his struggles with anger and how the Lord helped him overcome them.
 - *Where in your life have you seen the Lord's faithfulness to help you overcome struggles with sin?*
- Many times, in Dr. Carson's life, he had to step out in faith and fully trust the Lord, not knowing what would happen next.
 - *Describe a time when you took a step in faith without knowing the potential outcome. Was it fearful, and how did you process the fear?*
- In today's culture, there is an unapologetic push, from the highest offices and the media to our children's schools for people to rely more heavily on the government than upon God.
 - *Are there times when you are tempted to think that money or economic policies are more important than the Holy Spirit's influence on society? Why do you think we are inclined to pursue other solutions before going to Jesus?*

- In Dr. Carson’s early years, he faced numerous struggles and hardships—from poverty to racism to academic disparities—yet the Lord used his life in some miraculous ways.
 - *How have you seen the Lord redeem even the most hopeless circumstances for his glory, either in your own life or in someone else’s life?*

Prayer

Father, I thank You for the reminder of Your great majesty and power. We come today to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to present ourselves to You, Lord. We give You our wills, plans, dreams, and objectives—along with our hurt, challenges, and inadequacies. We present them to You today. I thank You that, through the work of the cross, you have made provision so we could be redeemed out of the hand of the enemy—that all of Satan’s power that has been directed at us has been canceled through the work of the cross.

We accept Your assignment for our lives, as men and women in God, as husbands and wives, as parents, as citizens and as neighbors. May we not be distracted by all the avalanche of ungodliness, the voices of condemnation, or by our own weakness and frailty. May our attention be turned to You. Lord, we say yes to Your will and Your invitation. Holy Spirit, rid us of a spirit of fear, and may the spirit of repentance come to us as never before. Through it all, may the name of Jesus be lifted up and Your kingdom extended. In Jesus’ name, amen.