

Studies in the Gospel of John 02 - Peter's Denial

by Alden Gannett

The sermon explores Peter's denial of Jesus, his repentance, and his restoration, highlighting the importance of faith and trust in Jesus and the call to live in the future and not in the past.

Duration: 50:01

Scripture: Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Denial"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of watching, waiting, and looking for the second coming of Jesus Christ. He encourages believers to trust God for every problem, need, temptation, and opportunity of witness until Christ returns. The speaker also mentions the faith of the Israelites in the Old Testament and how they believed in God through difficult times. He concludes by referencing Philippians 4:6-7, where the peace of God is promised to those who are anxious for nothing and trust in Him.

Transcript

Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will but come again and receive you unto myself. Where I am, there ye may be also. Our Lord prepares us for these words in chapter 13, beginning with verse 36.

John 13, 36. Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, where goest thou? Jesus answered him, Where I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow. For thou hast denied me thrice, three times. This question of Peter, Lord, where goest thou? comes from the introductory announcements we saw together last night, here in John 13, verse 31 through verse 35.

You remember the introductory announcement of our Lord's glorification, then of his departure, and then of the new commandment to love one another. But somehow Peter missed the emphasis upon the glory, and Peter missed the emphasis upon the new commandment. What Peter heard was, I'm going away.

I so often notice this in teaching. Your heart is so burdened about something. And I remember so well, at Dallas Seminary a number of years ago, having a great burden upon my heart for a certain truth in the text, and we were teaching away, expounding some book in the Course in Bible Exposition, and just as we got to the end of the hour, when I was so anxious for the Lord to drive the truth home, some student back in the corner raised this question, and the student spoke up and said, Professor, what's the Hebrew on that? Oh, he missed the heart of it.

Our Lord wanted Peter to see his glory. The Lord wanted Peter to sense a new responsibility of loving. But all Peter heard was, I'm going away.

So after the Lord has given his threefold introductory announcement, the question comes from Peter, verse 36 again of John 13. Lord, where are you going? I thought you came to establish a kingdom. I thought you came to fulfill all the great predictions, great prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Now you say you're leaving us. The kingdom isn't here yet. We're not feeding every man under his vine and under his fig tree yet.

We haven't beat all the swords into plowshares and all the spears into pruning hooks yet. The glory of the Lord doesn't fill the earth as the knowledge of the glory of the Lord doesn't fill the earth as the waters cover the sea yet. The Lord answers him, where I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Peter, you are going to follow me later. And he spells this out in chapter 21. Turn there a moment.

21. Verse 18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Peter, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest where thou wouldst.

But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou wouldst not. What did he mean? He tells us, verse 19. This spoke he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.

When he had spoken this, he said unto him, follow me. Peter, the day is coming when you will stretch forth your hands, as mine are going to be stretched within ours on a cross. Peter was being told by our Lord that he would die later by crucifixion, just as our Lord would soon experience this.

Verse 37 of John 13. Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? Here is urgent Peter. Here is insistent Peter.

And Peter says, I will lay down my life for thy sake. Lord, I am willing to die for thee. Did he mean it? Of course he meant it.

He meant it with all his heart. I certainly believe. Did you ever tell the Lord something you meant with all your heart? Certainly.

Elsewhere we are told that Peter says, though all men forsake thee, all men be offended by thee, yet will not I. Jesus answered him, wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Peter, do you really mean it? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice. Here is Peter boasting. Peter boasting.

But Peter didn't know his heart. You and I don't know ours. The heart is deceitful above all things, and what? Desperately wicked.

Yes. Now let's turn to Luke 22 and see this in detail. This fulfills.

We've seen Peter boasting. Now look at Peter denying. Luke 22, verse 54 and following.

Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house, and Peter followed where? Far off. You always get into trouble when you do that, don't you? When they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and were seated together, Peter sat down among them. More trouble.

Unless he was there for an aggressive, active witness for the Lord. That's not so here. But a certain maid beheld him.

The Lord bless the maids. What amazes me is that here is Peter so robust, you know, so boastful. Oh, man.

Standing before a maid. And the maid there earnestly looked upon him and said, This man was also with him. Here in Pilate's judgment hall.

And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. All these words were uttered just hours after this boast. And after a little while, another saw him and said, Thou art also of them.

Peter said, Man, I am not. After about the space of one hour, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him. For he is a Galilean.

Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. Lord, I will lay down my life for thee. Though all men be offended, yet will not I. Said this insane man, Peter, just a few hours before.

Verse 60 must record, Immediately while he yet spoke, The cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Wonder what was in his face.

Wonder what that look meant. I've been married now for a whole quarter of a century. Gets better all the time.

Amen. All my wife has to do is look. I get the message.

Sure. Just a look in the eye says so much, doesn't it? The more you get to know one another, the more those looks become. Every so often she'll say, Honey, I hate you.

And then with a twinkle in the eye, with a smile on the face, just denies everything she said. Just a look, that's all. Sure.

The Lord looked at Peter. I'm sure after last night's message it was a look of love. A look of sympathy.

A look of understanding. A look of forgiveness. The Lord looked at Peter.

And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crows thou shalt deny me Christ. And Peter went out and wept bitterly. Of course.

I have nothing but sympathy for Peter this morning. Because I've done the same. I've had opportunities to witness, and I did not redeem them.

I had opportunities to confess Christ, and I did not confess Him. Most of us here have been there, haven't we? When we could have given a word of testimony for the Savior. And oh, how we regretted it later.

We'll not take time to turn, but Mark 16 on resurrection morn. The angel there says to those, Oh, go tell my disciples and Peter. First Corinthians 15 tells us that that meeting took place.

Nothing is told us, nothing is recorded in Scripture of the details. But one thing for sure, Peter repented. The bitter tears were real.

The expression of his heart, oh, how he not with Judas regretted. Not only so, but he repented. The Lord forgave him.

Now turn to the 21st chapter of John. I want us to see Peter rejoicing. I put that title over it because I can't find a better one.

I'm sure there is a better one here, but at least that truth is wonderfully there. You know, Peter goes fishing, verse 3 of John 21. And they say unto him, We also go with thee.

And they went forth and entered into a boat immediately, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. And then Jesus said unto them, Children, have ye any food? And they answered him, No.

Well, that's an awful question to fishermen. That's a terrible question to fishermen. Without toiling and toiling and toiling.

That's the worst part about fishing, coming home with an empty boat. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. And they cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fish.

Here's our point, verse 7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, John, saith unto Peter, It's the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he gird his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea. What? With a net full of fishes? A fisherman leaves his net? You know Peter had met the Lord, and you know it was a time of repenting.

And you know when the Lord was more important than 153 fish in the net to a fisherman, you know that the Lord meant a lot to Peter right now. So Peter jumps out of the boat and goes to meet his Lord. Peter's rejoicing.

Rejoicing over forgiveness. Sounds like the psalmist, Psalm 51, Restore unto me the joy of my salvation. It takes forgiveness for that, doesn't it? It takes cleansing for that.

But oh, when there is that cleansing and forgiveness, the psalmist can say, Then will I teach transgressors thy way when all is well, when my heart's rejoicing again, when the guilt has been removed, the burden's been lifted, and I'm rejoicing again in my Lord. Then I'll go on and serve you as I ought to. Peter's rejoicing.

Rejoicing. Verse 12, Then Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples dared ask him, Who art thou, knowing that it was the Lord? Then Jesus then cometh and taketh bread and giveth them and fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, who boasted and then denied his Lord and then repented, and in this context is rejoicing. Now he's confessing, publicly confessing his law, the very opposite of that night of denial.

Here he is now before these other disciples. This is a public meeting. His time of repenting was private.

Now before the others in the presence of his fellow disciples, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me more than these, more than these boats, more than these nets, more than these 153 fish? I don't think so. More than these other disciples. Why do I interpret it that way? Well, there's a threefold denial and here a threefold confession.

So I relate this to the denial of our Lord as the public repentance, you see, the public confession of our Lord. Also there's a fire here. There was a fire there in Pilate's judgment hall.

Somehow there's a contrast. And also this Peter, you remember, boasted that he, though all these other disciples would be offended, yet not I. So in this context, I understand the Lord to mean, Peter, do you love me more than these other disciples love me? You said before that you did. And he saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

Peter doesn't use the same word the Lord did. The Lord used that word agape, the verb agapao that we saw last night. Peter uses another word that simply says, I'm fond of thee.

Peter's not boasting the way he did the night before the crucifixion. He's wonderfully grown in grace. It reminds me of my experience in Brazil a few weeks ago.

I was standing there on the platform after the closing service of our field conference. And a young man came up on the platform and looked me in the eye and I said, I know you. You are my student at Dallas Seminary.

I couldn't remember his name and he gave it to me. He was a student who took an F for a course in personal evangelism because he didn't believe the Holy Spirit could lead him to witness to two people a week. Imagine that.

So he took an F on the basis of principle. The Spirit of God doesn't lead me to witness to two people. And after two or three years of seminary, he dropped out of the course altogether.

He didn't need all that, you know. He'd already arrived. And he went out, joined Wycliffe Bible Translators.

I didn't know until that night that he went back to the seminary and finished his course. It's a good thing to finish something, you know. Now he's the top man in Brazil for the whole country of Brazil.

He's the specialist when translators have a problem, they call him. That night he stood there and looked me in the eye and he said, I've learned a lot since I sat in your classes. The Lord's taught me a lot.

He was saying, I don't boast the way I used to boast. I'm not the supra-spiritual fellow that you knew me to be back in seminary days. God's taught me lots of things.

I'm a lot lower tonight. He said. That's where Peter is.

Not boasting now. Verse 16, He said to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I'm fond of thee. He saith unto him, feed my sheep.

And he saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? The Lord uses Peter's word this time. I'm fond of thee, dear. Are you fond of me? And Peter was grieved because he saith unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he saith unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things.

Thou knowest that I love thee. Peter's insistent. Yeah.

You see, Peter, you boasted before. Then you went right out into the night and denied me. Three times.

Now before your fellow disciples, I want to hear you confess me three times. For you see, the Lord had given to Peter the keys to the kingdom. And it was Peter who would send the appendix to Jews.

And Peter would go down to Samaria and put his hands upon the new believers there. And it was Peter who would be in the house of Cornelius. The Lord had given to Peter the key to open the door to Jews, to Samaritans, to Gentiles.

This Peter now, on the day of Pentecost, who stands up filled with the Spirit of God, that dish-ragged Peter, now has got a backbone. He's got starch in him now. The Spirit of God has filled him.

And he calls them betrayers and murderers of Jesus Christ. Preaches the life and the death and the resurrection of the Son of God. And they're pricked in their hearts.

And they cry out, what must we do? Peter said, Repent! Let each one of you who has repented be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Because of the remission of sin, you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And God marvelously moved through this man who boasted and denied, but repented and confessed his loss.

And here he is, usable in the hands of God the Holy Spirit. I like Peter. Maybe I'm speaking to somebody here today who feels you've been on the shelf, who, like Peter in days past, failed.

And you wondered if God can ever use you again. He used Peter. Three thousand people were converted in one day.

More than most people see converted in a lifetime. The man who boasted and denied had to repent. You see? He had to publicly confess his Lord before his own.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God filled him. He's now usable. Perhaps somebody here today needs this.

Oh, you've lived in the past. God says live in the future. God says repent.

Your heart will again rejoice. Confess him now. Claim the filling of his Spirit, the control of the Spirit of God over your life, and go on.

Let God use you. You know, he hasn't taken you home yet because he wants to still use you. Did you know that? He didn't bring you to Park of the Palms to sit, soak and shower, as Vance Havner puts it.

When he's through with you, he'll take you home, my brother, my sister. That's right. No retirement.

God's army takes you home when he's through with you. So he still has a place for you. You may not have quite the health and strength and the vigor you once had physically, but there's a place somewhere.

There's a place of usefulness somewhere. It may be on your knees. It may be that extra dollar you can give.

It may be that witness in Keystone Heights. It may be the encouragement of the saints right here, the saints who come and go, the saints in the hospital, the saints who are afflicted, the saints who need that word of prayer and encouragement someplace. A place God can use you.

Not through with you yet. When we left Birmingham, we went over to see Miss Helen Wright's mother. God had taken her dear companion home.

She was left alone, nearly blind, in a nursing home. Yet she'd go up and down those halls and find her way and talk to folks about the Lord. And she said, Oh, I'm homesick.

I want to go home. I want to go home. But she said, God's left me here for a reason.

And she said, That reason is to keep before the Lord my loved ones. I just keep praying for them. She still had a sense of mission.

Eighty-nine. Blind. All alone.

Just yet knew God left her here for ministry. Peter. Do you love me? Still have a place for you.

Still want to use you. Now, chapter 14. There should be no chapter division here, whatever.

You see, these were put in by men. Our Lord goes right on with the answer to Peter's question. Verse 36 of chapter 13 of John.

Lord, where goest thou? The Lord says, Let not your heart be troubled. Why did he bring up this subject? The context. Why he just dismissed Judas.

They're down to 11 now. He just announced that he's going away. That's enough to trouble anybody's heart.

When your leader's leaving. And now he just said Peter's going to deny him. Why, Peter's this potion for the crowd.

And he's going out here in a matter of hours and deny his Lord. That's enough to be troubled. Why, the bottom's dropped out of everything.

Ever been there? Yes, I've been there. And the Lord says, here's the approach. Here's what you're to do.

When the bottom seems to drop out of everything. When there seems no way to turn. When there seems to be no hope.

There seems to be no answer, whatever. What do you do now? The Lord says, let not your heart be troubled. You just have to laugh at this, don't you? Sounds ridiculous.

Oh, this is just God's way. The fruit of the Spirit is love. And what's the next word? Joy.

Our joy is not determined by the circumstances, is it? That's happiness. That's dependent upon the happenings. We've got something far greater than happiness.

Deep abiding joy, which is the fruit of the Spirit of God, which is available when it appears that the bottom's dropped out of everything. When there's no hope, the fruit of the Spirit is joy. The fruit of the Spirit is peace.

Let not your heart be troubled. What's the approach? Aspirin? Alka-Seltzer? Tranquilizers? Taste the floor? No, that isn't what he says at all. Let not your heart be troubled.

You what? You believe. The Greek is the imperative here. It can be indicative or imperative.

The better translation here is imperative. Keep on believing in God. Keep on believing in me.

That's the approach. That'd make a Presbyterian shout. Hmm? Keep on believing.

Why, Abraham believed me. He left the area of Chaldees and came to the land of Canaan. They believed me in Egypt after a bit of trial and hardship, and left Egypt and headed for Canaan.

They had problems at Kadesh Barnea, the wandering along in the wilderness, but they believed me and crossed the Jordan, went into the promised land, and they believed me and the walls of Jericho fell down, and they believed me and the southern campaign was triumphant. They believed me and the northern part was triumphant. Oh, you believe me through the centuries, oh, many dark hours, and I'm still on the throne and still the sovereign Lord, and still able and sufficient.

Keep on believing in God. And he says to his disciples, keep on believing in me. You trusted me enough to leave your nets and follow me at the Sea of Galilee.

Didn't you? You trusted me for three and a half years. You never went hungry, did you? You were there when we took the five loaves and the two fishes and blessed them and break them and fed five thousand men plus women and children. Just keep on believing in me.

That's the approach to every problem. Too simple, preacher. Well, that's the Lord's way.

Complicated, if you like. Mess it all up, if you like. Worry your heads off, if you will.

And if you learn, that doesn't solve any problems. That just turns the blessing off. Sure.

For we walk by what? Faith, not by saints. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord by faith, so keep on walking in him by faith.

That's it. Hebrews chapter 11. Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must what? Believe that he is, that he is a rewarder of them who diligently do what? Seek him, I pay.

Got a problem this morning? Everybody here has a problem. Got a burden? Everybody here has a burden. Everybody here has an unanswered prayer.

A loved one who needs Christ. A loved one walking afar off. A loved one in physical health.

Perhaps yourself this morning. Perhaps loneliness. Perhaps difficulties.

Perhaps financial needs. Social needs. Personal needs of some kind.

Here's God's approach. Here's God's way. Let not your heart be troubled.

Keep on believing in God. Keep on believing in me. Sounds like Philippians 4, 6 and 7, doesn't it? Be anxious for, that's hard to say, isn't it? Be anxious about nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And then what happens? The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. I'll never forget the day Brother E.J. Rowe, the chairman of our board at Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham for so many years, one of the founders of the college, the doctor said to him, Mr. Rowe, you no longer can go out. You no longer can go to the meetings at the college.

We had a Wednesday morning Bible class. He was there in the front row every Wednesday morning. Monday night evening school there every Monday night.

Nothing took priority over these two meetings for Brother Rowe. The doctor says, no longer can you go. Well, that's taking away a man's life.

Some of you have been there. He said, I took Philippians 4, 6 and 7, that moment to be anxious for nothing. It worked for him.

He rejoiced till the Lord took him home. And he spent the last year, year and a half, I've forgotten now, in a nursing home. Some of that time in bed completely, rejoiced till the Lord took him home.

See, this works. This works. Of course it works.

God's Word. God knows best. Now, first approach.

First answer to the question, where goest thou? The first answer is, trust me. Trust me. Second answer is, in my father's house are many mansions.

Trust me. Ah, there in the glory. I'm going to leave you.

But in my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. Father's house is the second answer.

I'm going away for a purpose. I'm not leaving to be mean. I'm not leaving you here without ample provision in my absence.

I'm going on a mission, and that mission is on your behalf. I'm going to prepare dwelling places for you. The word mansions is not the best, this is not the best translation of the word.

There are going to be mansions all right, in contrast to what we live in down here. But the word here literally means resting places. Resting places for troubled hearts.

How's that? It's the word they used back there when this gospel was written, of those places along the road, on those hot days there in the ancient Near East, where they would walk along hour after hour into the hot Near Eastern sun, and all how they would need rest and refreshment and renewal. This word is the word for those places where they stopped and had that refreshing cup of cold water, and where they could relax and rest and be refreshed along the way. That's the word here.

Sounds like Hebrews 4. There's a rest for the people of God. Not only at the moment of saving faith, and not only through this life, but forever and ever and ever and ever in the presence of the Lord. There's a rest for the people of God.

Dr. Ironside said heaven is a place of no more. No more sin. No more suffering.

No more separation. No more sorrow. No more death.

Place of no more. Great place. Resting place.

I'm going to prepare resting places for you. Isn't it great to be a Christian? Isn't it great to have a hope like this? The Lord says, I'm going to prepare a place. Did you know heaven's a place? That's the word here.

I go to prepare a place for you. Tell us about it. The Bible doesn't say very much about heaven, does it? Like going home to see the kids, the grandchildren.

At the breakfast table this morning, I was very kindly reminded of the fact that I hadn't inquired about the grandchildren yet. All right. Doesn't matter too much about the house the kids live in, does it? Doesn't matter too much about the size of the lot? The important thing is being with them, isn't it? Sure.

Well, the Lord doesn't tell us a lot about heaven. Doesn't spell out the details of heaven. The important thing is He's going to be there.

That's it. I go to prepare a place for you. Dr. Sheehan.

Some of you know that name. Used to be in Macon, Georgia. Mercado Baptist.

He's in northern Georgia now, I understand. I remember so well his telling of the heresy trial they had there in Georgia a number of years ago. They had a professor in one of their schools who denied that heaven was a place.

So they wrote the members of the convention and the pastors, and because they went to the president of the administration of the college and they do nothing about it, so they wrote the pastors. The pastors got up on their hind legs and said, let's have a heresy trial. We don't want this taught to our young budding ministers.

So they gathered together and put the professor on trial. But lo and behold, instead of the professor being on trial, they put the students on trial. One fellow professor on the faculty challenged this man who was on trial and said, I'm no scholar of the Greek language as you are, my dear sir, but the word here is topos, from which we get the word topography.

Heaven's a place. It's a place. It's a place.

Don't listen to these people who say all the heaven there is is down here and all the hell there is is down here. That's not what the Bible says. I go to prepare a topos, topography.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. Where I am, there you may be also.

Here's the third answer to Peter's question, where goest thou? He says, I'm going, yes, but I will come again. Here's that future hope. I will come again and receive you.

Where? Unto myself. Where I am. That's heaven.

Where I am, there ye may be also. That place of resting places where I'm coming to be with you. And I'm going to take you to be with me.

Now there's some dear folks, and maybe there's some here this morning, I do not know. There's some dear folks who teach us that the church goes through the tribulation period on earth. We call this theologically post-tribulation rapture of the church.

Now you're listening to a fellow who believes in a pre-tribulation rapture of the church. Why? Here's one text. Our post-tribulation rapture friends describe it this way.

Here's the age of grace in which we live, and then for seven more years, according to Daniel 9 and the book of Revelation, for seven more years, there's going to be unprecedented tribulation trouble on the earth, and the church is going through this tribulation period, and then the Lord's going to come, and when he comes, he's going to fulfill John 14, the church is going to be raptured into the air, and in the air we're going to be conformed to Christ and be made like him, and then immediately come right back down to the earth to rule and to reign with Christ for a thousand years. I can't fit that into this text. It doesn't fit.

The puzzle doesn't go together at all. Why? Well, this text says the Lord's gone away to prepare places, and when he comes back for us, he's going to take us to those places. Therefore, the Lord is going to come, take us to be with himself to heaven.

Now let's turn to Thessalonians as we close this morning. First Thessalonians 4. You know the text well. I just remind you of it.

I understand you've heard it in ministry week after week. Let's just be reminded of this blessed truth. Verse 16 of 1 Thessalonians 4. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God.

Here is the Lord again saying through Paul, I will come again. This same Jesus whom you've seen going to heaven is going to come back in like manner. Here is his return.

When he returns, verse 16, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Along with his return, the resurrection of the church saints, the dead in Christ. The Old Testament saints will not be here on this occasion.

They won't. Where'd you get that? The little prepositional phrase, in Christ. The Old Testament saints were not in Christ.

Right? One gets into Christ by the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit, which occurred the first time, not in the Garden of Eden, not in Abraham, not with John the Baptist, but on the day of Pentecost. The Old Testament saints were believers. The Old Testament saints went to heaven.

The Old Testament saints were the wife of Jehovah. Israel. But they're not the bride.

Christ. Is that all right? Yeah. Lots of women on these grounds these days.

Only one is my bride. You're lovely ladies. You love the Lord.

You're wonderful women. I love you in the Lord. Only one is my bride.

Old Testament saints, wonderful people, love the Lord, members of God's family, went to heaven. But not the bride. Christ.

Their promise was earthly. Their promise was the Millennium. Their promise was Jerusalem.

Their promise was a king on David's throne to rule over David's kingdom forever. That's their promise. You read Daniel chapter 12, and you find verse 1, the tribulation period, and then resurrection for Daniel's people of Israel.

And that's it. The Millennium is their inheritance. The Millennium is their promise.

And so it fits for the Old Testament saints to be resurrected at the close of the tribulation period to enter into their heritage, their inheritance. But you see, the church saints are resurrected at the rapture. Why? The bridegrooms come for his bride.

That's why you're in Christ today. The Lord should come today. Up you'll go.

And then that dear mother, that dear father, that dear husband, that dear wife, those dear children, those dear friends in Christ are returned to be resurrected. The dead in Christ shall be raised first. Why first? Somebody said they've got six more feet to go.

I don't know whether that's the only reason or not. He doesn't explain it, but they're going to rise first. Then, we who are alive, Paul said, we, we, we.

He said that in the first century. He expected to be in that company. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them.

Oh, we're going to see mom and dad. That's what he said. Oh, we're going to see those dear friends.

That's what he said. He said we're going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Ah, the altogether lovely one, the fairest of ten thousand.

Ah, he's the one we've got to see first. Of course. You see, the bride wants to see the bridegroom.

And so shall we ever beware with the Lord. I tell you, it's great to be a Christian. Amen? Now, when's he coming? I have no dates for you.

But I do find in chapter 5 of 1 Thessalonians, verse 6, that that generation, first century Christians, were told to watch. Watch. I find in chapter 1 of 1 Thessalonians, they were told to wait for his son from heaven.

And I find in Titus chapter 2 that a pastor of the first century was told to look for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. And I hear the Lord telling John in Revelation 22, three times, Behold, I come quickly, I come quickly, I come quickly. And John in the first century prayed, Even so come, Lord Jesus.

So if he told them 19 centuries ago to watch and to wait and to look, how much more in 1970? Oh, with all we see around us of Israel and all God is doing, you've been hearing about these days, we should watch and wait and look for his coming. In the meantime, what are we to do? The very thing we heard last night, verse 8 of 1 Thessalonians 5. Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and borne helmet the hope of salvation. I'm to trust him for every problem, every detail, every need, every temptation, every opportunity of witness till he comes, that's my approach, to walk by faith.

I'm to love everybody, as we heard last night, love one another with pure hearts, fervently, and all this in the expectation the Lord may come to death. Take me to be with him. Old Bishop Ralph Cushman, old Methodist bishop of years ago, loved the Lord dearly.

He said to my dear father one day when I was just a lad, Arthur, it's great to be a Christian. That's my testimony today as we bow together. Precious Father, how wonderful to be saved.

How wonderful to know the grace of God. Lord, if there's one here who doesn't know our Savior, make this truth so exciting, so precious, so whet the appetite of that one that he'll call upon Jesus Christ to save him. May we walk by faith.

May we love one another with pure hearts, fervently. May we watch and wait and look till he comes. This missus with thy blessings we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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