

Waiting and Looking Acts 1;

by J.M. Davies

Christ's followers are called to wait patiently for his return, be fruitful and productive in their service to him, and be willing to suffer for his sake.

Duration: 45:25

Scripture: Acts 1:8, Acts 8:1, Acts 8:5, Acts 8:14, Acts 8:26

Topics: "Christian Witness", "Faith Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about an old man in Bombay who was blind and used a white stick to attend worship meetings. Two English soldier boys mocked him, but the old man responded with kindness and shared his faith in Jesus Christ. The story then shifts to two boys in an English camp who were inspired by the old man's testimony and began praying together. The speaker emphasizes that our testimony for Jesus should not be hindered by our circumstances or limitations, and that witnessing for Christ is just as important outside of a formal church setting.

Transcript

And somebody shouted, John, were you not afraid while you were in the water all those hours? And a look of astonishment passed over the girl's face. She said, Afraid? Why should I be afraid? My father promised to come back. And he's never yet broke his word.

If I gave our brother Huffburn that little pamphlet from the insurance company, I am confident there would be a good little gospel appeal put at the end of that. And it is a definite promise for every count of God. Our great Lord and our Saviour that died on countless cross for our redemption, he said, I am going away.

But now he said, if by God I will come back and receive you unto myself, that where I am there he may be also. Our Lord, just like the little girl's father, has never yet broken his word, and he never will. And he has promised to come, and he will come.

But Christian tonight, I want to ask you, especially you young people in the meeting, are you waiting? And are you looking for a disappearance? I am not giving you scriptures tonight for the sake of time. But when I turn over the pages of my Bible to Acts chapter 1, I come to the last words of our Lord and Saviour. Upon the earth before his going, said he, I want you to be my witnesses.

Do you think it is possible for me to give you the earthly life story of our Lord Jesus? You know, the Gospel of Luke was written, and we find that the Acts was a continuation. And they seem to tell us, and I perfectly agree with them, that you could not close the life story of Jesus Christ because he lives today. But I would like to try in about two minutes to give you the earthly life story of our Lord.

He was born in a manger. At a young age he was taken into the land of Egypt, for safety's sake. Later, as a young child, he was brought back into the land.

And then there is a complete and an absolute silence concerning him until approximately 30 years of age. We find him ministering from Dan to Beersheba. After somewhere around three and a half years of ministering, we find he is taken and nailed on a Roman cross, buried in a borrowed tomb.

On the third day he rose triumphantly, and then, if we have our Easter unwritten to go by, about six weeks later, he was caught up into the heavenlies. And there, in two minutes, I have given you a complete picture of the life story of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, upon the earth. With one exception that I deliberately avoided.

From the age of a young child, to that glorious time of stepping out into ministry at 30, it seems as if a curtain of silence had been put over his life. We have today the mythical iron curtain of Russia. We have today the mythical bamboo curtain of China.

And we seem to have a curtain of silence concerning the life of our Lord from childhood, young childhood, until approximately 30 years of age. But it seems as if God blew apart the curtain. And as the curtain blew apart, we got one tiny, tiny glimpse of our Lord at the age of 12.

And now, at the age of 12, he's disappointed his earthly parents, for they've been traveling on the journey and they've missed him. And coming back, we find they had occasion to rebuke him. Why do you treat us so as the effect of their message? And the reply of the Lord Jesus Christ was this, If not, don't you know that I must now be about my father's business? Please remember, especially young people in the meeting tonight, that at around the age of 12 to 14, there's kind of an adolescence in the East, and they're beginning to mature earlier than in the Western Hemisphere.

He is stepping out of childhood into youth. And I am certain that our Lord would not have spoken such to an earthly parent, concerning an earthly parent. He was certainly not referring to Joseph, but he says, in effect, I must now be about my heavenly father's business.

Have you ever paused and realized that when I hear that statement from the Lord, I have the very first recorded words in Scripture of him upon the earth? There is not one word recorded of a statement of his before that tremendous statement that I must now be about my father's business. Then when I come to the book of Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, I come to the last recorded words. Never after these words do we hear of a word from him spoken upon the earth.

We certainly hear of him speaking from the heavenlies, the soul of Tartarus. But now, the last recorded words that ever left his lips upon the earth to this present time was this. You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Centurion, and even unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

The first recorded words of the Lord Jesus is that I must be about my father's business. What exactly is his father's business? This is the true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to do his father's business, to save sinners. His last recorded words are these.

It is no longer I that can walk from Dan to Beersheba. It is no more I that can go along the coasts of Galilee. And now I have completed my part of the task.

I, as a boy of twelve, could say it is my job. But now he says, you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. I find that people often say to me, Brother, I am not gifted to preach the gospel.

We have sisters sometimes say that Paul said that sisters should not usurp authority when brethren are present. Sisters should be silent when brethren are present. Therefore, my lips are sealed in preaching the gospel to the unsaved.

If it's a teenage boy in the meeting tonight, and because you cannot stand behind a few square feet of wood to proclaim the name of Jesus, don't let it hinder you in your testimony to your Lord. My beloved sister, if you think you can only stand behind this little bit of lumber and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, I'll tell you something. I feel that my ministry in the gospel is more important away from the gospel platform than even it is when I'm upon it.

You say, well, how can I witness? I had a close friend. We were in our early twenties. We were Sunday school teachers together in the city of Gloucester, Britain.

I found my way down to Jamaica serving the Lord, and dear Wilfred Durham found his way down into Bombay, India. Went home to be with the Lord at the age of 38, leaving a wife and four children. But he had an army service center in Bombay, and he was also looking after some work in a few of the assemblies.

And he tells us the story of the old man, 80 years of age. The dear old man was almost blind, and the only way he could go to the worship meeting, Lord's Day by Lord's Day, was with the age of a white stick. And also, he would have a great big, almost a corset Bible under his arm.

And walking down a narrow street of a little gospel chapel in Bombay, making his way, two British army service boys were walking up the other side of the street. Said Wilfred Durham in his letter, the two English soldier boys began to laugh. The old man was going to remember his loss.

The two English soldier boys in their khaki uniform were out for a Sunday sport. And one stopped and nudged the other and shouted across the road, Good morning, Grandpa! The old man stopped, he said, Good morning, boys. Grandpa, is that a Bible you got? Yes, boys.

Grandpa, how is Jesus Christ this morning? To that the old man pulled himself up straight. Boys, said he, do my eyes deceive me this morning? Are you not wearing the uniform of the British army? Are you English ones? Yes, Grandpa. Boys, perhaps I've made a mistake.

But for sixty years I've been getting on my knees and thanking God for your little island across the sea. Because it brought you, William Carey and others to bring us the gospel of Jesus Christ. And is it possible a man which has sent out missionaries to convert us, and now sending out boys to ask how Jesus Christ is, is it possible? Listen, boys, for a moment.

You see my Bible? For over fifty-five years I've got on my knees every morning and every night. And do you know, boys, I thank God for your little island, through the British and foreign Bible Society, sending us the word of God. Have I made a mistake? Is it possible you don't know how Jesus Christ is? Boys, he

said, if you don't know, I'll tell you.

Jesus Christ was saying yesterday, today and forever. Good morning, boys. And the old man made his way to the little gospel hall.

Some of you will say that wasn't much of a testimony. It was a testimony for nasty years. All the story goes on to tell us that two o'clock next morning in the English camp, up above the city of Bombay in the hills, a little cot creaked, and a boy named Fred got down on his knees at his bedside.

Within a couple of minutes another cot in the tent creaked, and a boy Fred came. He whispered, Tom, what are you doing? Fred, as a kid at twelve in a gospel hall in Britain, I gave my heart to Jesus Christ, I meant it. And that old man this morning showed me very plainly that I'd got away from him.

Fred, he's never left me. He's the same yesterday and today. I left him and I'm coming back, Fred said, Tom.

I've never known him, but the old man's words have been on my lips all day. Can you help me? And two o'clock on that Monday morning, Fred was restored to his God, and Tom accepted Christ as Savior. Today, in the mountains overlooking Bombay, there's a mission station.

And the missionaries in charge of that station are named Fred and Tom, all through the testimony of an old man eighty years of age. You, said Jesus Christ, shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Chapter seven closes with a tragedy.

For then I find that Heaven is beaten. His face is terribly misshapen from the stone's chime, and he's slouched to the foot of a whipping post. And he says, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

Did I say that was a tragedy? I cannot help but feel in my own mind that there's a greater tragedy in the commencement of chapter eight. And the tragedy I'm referring to is this. That we find chapter eight that they were preaching the gospel.

They moved down into Judea for fear of the Jews. And later in the chapter, we find that Philip is preaching the gospel in Samaria. And in that generation, the Apostle Paul had blazed the trail across the known world in his name.

The fulfillment of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was fulfilled in one generation as to what his last recorded words were given. First of all in Jerusalem, then in Judea, and then in Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth, that statement, his last spoken statement, was fulfilled completely in one generation. But did I say fear? Yes.

I don't wish to bring theatricals or be melodramatic on your platform, but I do ask you this. When the Lord stood before his disciples and said, Now I want you to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth, he was caught up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. That was not just a little paper band of disciples.

That was the representation of the church at large, even the church today. How do you think he spoke those words? Do you think it was with a tongue like a whiplash? Do you think it was with a keen eagle eye? He said, You men, get out and preach my gospel! Come along! Get out! No, sir. If I could possibly be an artist and paint a picture of that scene, I would put tears in their eyes.

I would put the most loving look upon the Savior's face that ever pain could paint. For I am sure it was with a heart of love and not with a voice of a whipcage. But he entreated, he pleaded with them, Take my gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth.

I can no longer do it through my lips, but I can still continue the work through yours. Will you lovingly go? And that tragedy of chapter 8 is, instead of going for love, they stayed on the streetcar tracks of Jerusalem until fear drove them out at the stoning of Stephen. You know, the last twelve months it's been a little bit easier to get into the United States of America.

I live about a hundred miles, a hundred and ten miles out of Toronto. And I had to drive in at 6.30, three mornings running, and spend three whole days in the consulate, the U.S. consulate in Toronto, and then drive back each night before my ticket of visa, which is called a visitor's visa, to come into the state any time I wish. And in spite of those thirty hours and about six, yes, six to seven hundred mile journey, for the first four years of our living in Canada, in spite of its stamp on my passport giving me a free entry into the states, there were time after time I was questioned and cross-questioned until I sometimes wonder if I could step into the states that day.

And going back to Toronto, I saw your consul himself, and I said, Sir, can you tell me why it is that you let me spend thirty hours in your consulate, and yet I'm given the third degree every time I want to cross the border? Yes, he said, I'll tell you why it is, but he said, I'll put a stamp on and cure that. But the reason is, Mr. Davis, is this. We are getting forty to sixty communists a day crossing the border.

And we can't stop it. You see, your countries were in fear, and are still in fear, of communism. When I landed from Jamaica in Peterborough, Ontario in 1953, I went down into the city of Ottawa, the capital of the nation, and I only saw one priest in the fall of the week I spent for a gospel campaign walking the streets.

You go there today, and the city is just riddled with nuns and priests. You find that Quebec is certainly not the only place that is a hundred percent Rome, but it is spreading like a prairie fire across Canada as hard as it can go. And I thank God night after night on Vengeance Eve, as God has put a bitter enmity between Rome and Russia.

And if they ever send a priest back, child of God, you and I would only preach the gospel in fear of our lives. They'd crush it. And it might be better for us if they did, or there would be more people standing up proclaiming the name of Christ.

This is not a mother's request, it's the command of our Lord, I want you to be my witnesses. Now, what exactly is his expectancy? If I go, I will come again? His final command is that you shall be my witnesses. Now we find his expectancy is found in James, chapter 5, verses 7 and 9. For there we find the husbandmen awaited for precious proof of the earth, and verse 9, the judge standeth before the door.

Are my hands willing hands, working hands, waiting to do the master's will? If you remember in Mark's gospel, chapter 12, the husbandman sent his servants, and then he sent his son. We find that his son shall go one place alone, and there the husbandman is awaiting the precious proof of the earth, and has long patience for it. Must I go an empty-handed, not one soul to meet my love? Tell me, child of God, how are your fruit-vests tonight? For the master is still awaiting the precious proof of the earth, and has long patience for it.

Please bear in mind that the judge standeth before the door. I worked in Jamaica with Mr. Harold Wildish, and not only in Jamaica, but also in Britain, with our paths crossed and were linked together often. And on one occasion, we were on the east coast of Britain, in a little tiny country assembly that was having a one-day concert.

I can see him now. There came into the little gospel chapel a boy that was mentally retarded. His name was Fred.

And Fred came in, a youth of about 18 in Britain. The villagers would call him the village idiot. But he was by no means an idiot.

He knew Jesus Christ as Savior. He used to do the menial tasks around the farm for the man that employed him. And I can see Fred now with that dirty old scarf around his neck, his hair all shaped and pulled the cloth cap off.

And during the afternoon conference, he was sat cutting a straw. And sitting on the platform while Brother Wildish was speaking, I noticed Brother Wildish said something like this. He said, Friends, the judge stands at the door.

And you know, friends, he said, I'm a workman, and Wildish pointed out his hands. He said, you see my hands? They're the honest hands, he said, of a workman. I go to Jamaica, he said, and I labor for my Lord in the gospel.

And then, he said, I get on a ship when I can hardly stand with exhaustion, and take a 14-day rest, and by the time I land in Britain, he said, you people in Britain have booked me up for meetings all over the country, and I'm only too glad to get on the ship again to go back to Jamaica for a rest. I think, said Wildish, I do an honest day's work. These are the hands of a workman.

But I noticed Fred begin to chuckle, and I could see quite a gleam coming to the dear boy's face, and he began to whisper, as though that I could see something was working in that poor old mind of Fred's. And after meeting Klaus, we made our way to the back, and standing in the doorway was Fred. Brother Wildish, show me your hands.

What? Show me your hands. So, Brother Wildish put his hands out, and Fred took them and began to feel carefully. He turned them over and examined the fingernail, and then he gave quite a slap.

He said, they're not the hands of a workman, Mr. Wildish. Look at mine. Calluses and cuts all over them, the fingernails very grimy from the tractor grease.

God forbid that we should criticize the workman, and we're certainly not good. Fred, but he put great importance on those hands of his that were cut and had and calloused and grimed. He said, call your hands the hands of a workman.

They're not, he said, they're not the hands of a workman. Child of God, the judge standeth before the door, and it may be in a coming day that our Lord could say to you, show me your hands. Must I go empty-handed? Not one soul to meet my Lord? Let us beware, young people, he might say that's not the hand of a workman.

Look at mine. And to your point of a hand, that bears the scars of Calvary, the only scars in the glory, the judge waited at the door. Friends, I want this meeting to close promptly, but I'm just going to quickly bring to you now his coming.

If I go, he said, I will come again, his promise. You shall be my witnesses, his command. The judge standeth at the door, the husbandman awaited for precious fruit of the earth, his expectancy.

And now we see his coming. It seems to me, in the first book of Thessalonians, chapter four, that somehow the apostle Paul had a very disappointing letter sent to Corinth. I've often wondered what that letter could have been like, and I've tried to surmise in my own mind it could have gone something like this.

Dear brother Paul, you came into our town and you preached the gospel, and during your gospel campaign, you know, that's the trouble with you young people today, why you don't understand scripture, I'll tell you right now. You try to put the things of scripture as something on a pedestal that is really out of reasoning for today. If you young teenagers want to learn the things of God, do it the way we taught the Jamaicans.

Read that precious book, and read it not once or twice or three times, but five, six, ten times, that particular portion of scripture. Mr. Wildish used to do it, I used to do it, and we got dozens of Jamaicans do it, and I'll tell you it's a treat to hear those Jamaicans minister the word of God. They sit down on a dark night in their little hut, and they close their eyes and they try to visualize that they were in the picture that they read so much during the day.

And you know, surprisingly, Daniel becomes very real if you try to think of it on that way. The disciples become very intimate if you try to put yourself as an onlooker into those lovely Bible stories. And do not try to think that things were so different in that day, the proper evangelization today is exactly the same as the evangelization of Paul's day.

That's why I bring this mythical letter to you. You were preaching the gospel, Paul, and as you were preaching the gospel, my husband and I were saved. We began to come to your cottage meetings.

We began to come into your ministry meetings. We came into your prayer meetings. And during those meetings, whilst down in Thessalonica, we oft times used to hear you say, the Lord is coming again, he's coming drawn at night, and we shall be caught up to be with him.

But Paul, something's happened in our home and it's shaken my faith. You know, Paul, that my husband and I used to go out each night and say, well, perhaps before that moon goes down tonight, Jesus will come. Possibly before the dawn of another day, he'll be here, we'll be with him, like Paul told us.

And we lived in hourly expectancy because you told us so much about Jesus coming again. But Paul, something's happened and I see tears staying from the paper now. My husband's dead and he's misprogressing.

And I think it's something like that, that we get that lovely reply of Paul, he says, now concerning them which are asleep, sorrow not, as to those which have no hope. Now listen, if there's an unsafe friend in the meeting tonight, listen very carefully. Concerning those, he said, which have sorrow not, such as those which have no hope, there's going to be a great shout and the trump of God shall sound, and the dead, listen my friend, the dead in Christ shall rise first.

And we which are alive shall be caught up together with them, and we shall meet him in the air, and so shall we be forever with the Lord. The coming of the Lord is in a moment, the scripture says. No, not much.

Our being, brother Rogers, brother Hoffman, brother Jones, brother Patterson, others, living creatures upon the earth, and their parents and forefathers which have died in Christ, six feet lower down. In a moment, as it proves, they are not alive, but dead in Christ shall be raised first. And we shall be caught up together with them to meet Christ in the air.

And so shall we be forever with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words. Wonderful comfort for the believer, but my, oh my, wonderful desolation for those not trusting in Christ.

If there's a man or a woman, a boy or a girl in this meeting tonight, I want to give you on the authority of the word of God. It's not my word, it's God's. But for you to die out of Christ, there is going to be that tragic thing which Paul refers to in that letter to the Thessalonians, those which are without hope.

Why? Because they're not washed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. What's going to happen for those that have died in their sins? What is going to happen for any, perhaps somebody in this meeting tonight? But on the earth, when Jesus come and made not petal the great transgression Calvary, there's no need for me to bring you a long oration concerning the cross-work of Christ. You know it, you've been taught it in Sunday school.

You know that Jesus Christ died for your sins on Calvary's cross. You know that that precious blood that flowed from his head, his hands, his feet, his thighs, is the only atonement for sin. I am not detaining you tonight to go into that euphoric from childhood day.

What I am going to impress upon you is that if you're outside of Christ, you're living in dangerous days. For the coming of the Lord's rod is nigh, it almost seems as if we can hear his footsteps on the threshold at the door. Some of us were startled yesterday and today when we hear that it's Poland putting up their hands and pushing back the great nation of Russia.

Some of us are wondering what's going to happen with the Jewish canal. Others of us are wondering what's going to happen to the gas or stress or the fighting arms. It's telling me word by word and letter by letter and paper after paper of your faith that Jesus Christ is coming in an hour when he thinks not.

We can almost hear him coming according to the fulfillment of scripture. My unsaved friend, as time after time you've gone the crossroads of salvation. As time after time you've been brought to a point of decision, you heard Jesus Christ knocking at your door.

And you faced him and you said no, some other time, I'm too busy, I will not take him now. And Satan has hardened your heart, Satan has stiffened your neck, and up to this moment of time you're still saying no. What's going to be your ultimate end? I'll tell you what it's going to be.

I am reading from Revelation chapter 20. And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of a bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

And cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up, and set a seal upon him. Listen, verse 5. What's going to happen to the people that died in their sins? What's going to happen to you that believe upon the

earth, rejecting Christ when he sets into the earth? But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

When I go down to verse 10 and I read, And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Now let's get one thing straight. There are people at lunch today, and they have possibly visited your home.

They have possibly knocked at your door trying to sell literature. And they tell you that there is no such a thing as eternal destruction. It is only soul sleep.

There are people that tell you that the only thing you're going to lose is that you're going to lose the glories of heaven. You will be in a state of sleep or unconsciousness as there's no such a thing as eternal punishment. My friend, that is a lie out of hell itself.

Listen. And the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were passed. And he goes on, And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

And then he tells me, And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.

Verse 14, And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. If you consider the second death soul sleep, please remember that it said, And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.

That is the place we find in verse 10 where Satan was cast, and if that is anything like an unconsciousness, I don't know. Hell today is a waiting room for the lake of fire. And it is the first class waiting room for the terrors that lie for eternity.

But I hear somebody else say that you just read it, that they were judged according to their works. Please remember, this does not include the believer in Jesus Christ, for he was caught up a thousand years before when Jesus Christ stepped into the air. This is the rest of the dead souls that died in verse 10.

And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. I don't want to send you home scared or frightened. And that is the reason, as I close this meeting now, it was never God's intention that you should find back your ultimate end.

That's the reason he sent his son to die on Calvary's cross before redemption. You are going to meet him at the place called Calvary, and then meet him gloriously triumphantly in the air. Or you're going to reject him at the place called Calvary, and meet him in this coming day when you will hear from his lips, he part, I know you now, whose fault is it that he knows you not? Tonight again he is yearning, he is longing, he is pleading for you to come to him and accept him as your own personal savior.

He is yearning that you might make that decision for him now. It's got to be made at the place called Calvary. Are you going to meet him there? And then meet him on that great resurrection morning? Or are you going to continue in your waywardness? Continue in your rejection? Continue by doing what Satan's been doing for you is hurting your heart and stripping your neck and rejecting him? The decision tonight my friend is yours, I can do no more.

But if you want to talk it over, as God's servant, I want to be your servant. But if there's one in this meeting tonight outside of Christ, I advise you, sir. I advise you, madam.

I advise you, boy, girl, whoever you may be, that Jesus said, My spirit shall not always strike with man. And he might have put this into my mind to bring this little few minutes message at the close of what I intended to say to you. Are you going to accept? Or are you going to reject tonight? Your blood is not upon my head.

But you must make that decision tonight. Are you going through that door saying yes to him? Or are you going through that door tonight saying no, I will not settle this matter for eternity tonight? Brother Hoffman, will you close the meeting in prayer, please? All right.

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