

Bristol Conference 1973-05 the Lord Jesus Christ

by Stan Ford

Jesus' ascension into heaven is a reminder of his sacrifice and love for us, and is a sign of his power and authority, and we can know that he will return in the same way that he left.

Duration: 33:12

Scripture: Matthew 27:46, Matthew 28:20, Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Revelation 19:7

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah and understanding the purpose of his coming. He highlights the significance of Jesus' ascension and the eyewitness accounts of his disciples. The preacher also emphasizes the love and compassion of Jesus, as seen in his broken body and the blessings he bestowed upon his followers. The sermon concludes with the reminder that Jesus is coming again, and his return will bring blessings and fulfillment of God's promises.

Transcript

The former treatise of Imado Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandment unto the Apostle whom he had chosen, to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many intolerable things, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. I mentioned him in my hymn book, The Choice Hymns of the Faith, I believe that is, is Alfred Macy's lovely hymn. Why, do all God's nature glorify him, throw him o'er, vanquish every foe, all he needs? Is death a prod of early bloom, is it? O God, in his palm did burst, lift me up to heaven's height, to see the Lord enthroned in light, glory there, I may reflect his image, here.

And it is because, this evening, we are continuing our studies in the first event, and we are dealing tonight with an example of the day in which he was taken up, and I wanted to quote to you that third verse of the hymn, the day in which he was taken up, here, we might reflect his image, here. And I pray that this, of our reading and consideration of the Word of God, tonight, you will remember during the past evening, for surely it beholds us just to go through very briefly what we have considered, you will remember that we were considering a little of it, our blessed Savior. We thought a little of the lowliness of his birth, and I am

certain that every one of us wondered as we thought of he whose body prepared of the Father, and produced of the Spirit, and possessed of the Son, was the body of a man, and he moved to Moses.

When one ponders the lowliness of his birth, and one realizes that there he lay, in the very danger of escape, and I often allow my imagination to run away with me, I often think of that day, and when I weigh an imagination to that table, and remember that there's no candle, there's no light there, and yet that table is the very light of the world. I remember there's no doctor, and no midwife there, and yet that table is the very great physician. I remember that there's no food there, for there was no place in the inn, they had no room or time for him, and yet his table is the very bread of heaven.

So, I marvel at the lowliness of his birth, and we were thinking not only of the lowliness of his birth, but we were thinking of the lowliness of his life. We thought of this blessed Christ who moved among men, who could hear the exclamation of heaven, this is my beloved, this is my unwell being. Oh brethren, sisters, may I say this to you, and I'm sure you would say it to me, but the more I open my Bible, and the more I read of the Lord Jesus, the more I realize that he was a wonderful person.

I'm utterly amazed at the lowliness of his life, but then I also acknowledge that I am but a man. I also acknowledge that the Bible tells me that there were many things that Jesus did and said, that there was no room to record all that was said and done. There are so many things I don't know about him, but isn't it wonderful that there was not a grasp he took, that there was not a stance he took, that there was not an action he did, but God the Father bore it all.

And the more I go through the Bible, the more I read it all, and the more I understand it all, and my knowledge so vast that I can't measure it all, yet there's a Father in heaven that knows it all, and seen it all, and he says this is my Father. In whom I find all my love. Oh, my young friend, you spend your life searching the Scripture concerning the Christ, and you'll still find there's more to find out, and you'll still find that he's more wonderful than ever you thought he was.

But if we can think a little of the loneliness of his time, and the loneliness of his death, did not we spend one occasion to consider the loneliness of his death? We thought of this one who went on to Calvary. While we may not have quoted the verses, I am sure we could have quoted the words of the sixty-third of Isaiah, and I'm certain none of us would have been in any doubt that it speaks of the Savior I have found alone. Oh, please don't come to me afterwards and say that, Mr. Preacher, this is the nineteenth of Revelation.

I know it is, but because he will tread the one path of the love of God in a vain attempt on, and cannot allow, he's treading it there, because on Calvary he's brought below. That's the requirements of God and all our needs. You know, brethren, sisters, the more I think of the loneliness of Christ, the more my heart is moved.

You see, there is a loneliness, isn't there? Some of us know something of the loneliness of life. I spend most of my time away from my wife and my children and my grandchildren, and I have never got used to being away from them. There are times when I find myself desperately lonely, and if occasionally you see me wander off on my own, you can rest assured of this, that I am no longer in your lovely country as lovely as it is, and I'm back home again, and I'm thinking of the children and the grandchildren and the ones.

There's a loneliness of faith. Many a time you have a loneliness of faith. Could there be a lonelier faith than Calvary? Will you remember there's something deeper in loneliness than the loneliness of faith?

There is a loneliness of faith.

To be surrounded with thousands of people, to have them clamor that you might speak to them and bless them, yet find yourself so distantly away from them. Have you ever thought to think that in thirty-three and a half years of keeping us locked in this thing, a day and a day he's only supposed to talk to someone about the purpose of his being here? A day and a day he's trying to. On one occasion, a sweet king, who had actually turned to a disciple, having spoken to him of the reason for his being in this scene, and hearing the disciple refusing for it, he had the pleasure of the disciple standing behind him, saying, There was only one occasion in thirty-three and a half years that Jesus would speak intelligently to anyone as to the reason he came into this scene.

And, on that occasion, God had to lift the lip of a prophet, summon some prophet and a patriarch to speak on the mount of transfiguration of the deceit that he should accomplish at Jerusalem, or the loneliness of the cross. But, if we have brought him to ease of the loneliness of his past, the loveliness of his life, and the loneliness of his death, does he think, Oh, bless God, we're going to talk of the lostness of his exaltation. We're going to remember that they may have placed him in a tomb, and up on that tomb he arose, and blessed be God, he ascended into glory.

May I read the words of our text tonight? Until the day in which he was taken up. Taken up. May I do what I said? I don't know that I have, but may I do what I said I would do every evening? May I tell you what I'm going to tell you? We're going to look, just for a moment, first at the expediency of his attempt.

Do you remember the words of Jesus himself? It is expedient that I should go. We're going to look at the expediency of his attempt. Then we're going to look, if we may please, for a moment, at the ease of his attempt.

We're going to see some of the things that happened ere he was received of his glory. But then we're going to look not only at the expediency of his attempt, and the ease of his attempt, but we're going to look together, if we may, at the eyewitnesses of his attempt. We're going to see who it was that saw him.

Then you will well understand, if I suggest to you, that we will also consider the extent of his attempt. Where has he gone? How far has he gone? For the extent of this left favor of ours, we know something of the depth to which he went, but how high has he gone back? How high? First of all, then, can we look together for a moment or two at the expediency of his attempt? In the glorious words of the Savior himself, in the 16th chapter of John, and in verse 7, it is expedient that I should go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come. May I repeat that? It is expedient that I should go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come.

What is the plan of this? Any of time, I expect, we have wondered why it was, having risen from the dead, that Jesus Christ did not stay, did not stay right here in this scene at that moment. And when we do, we come to the same conclusion, don't we? And this is the conclusion we're bound to come to, that there is a sense that we're glad that he didn't stay. Last evening, I would say, Mr. MacLean, showed you some of the lies of his trip away to Jerusalem.

I've been hearing today of some of you other folks that are going, I believe, this year or maybe next year. Have you ever thought of the sense of what would have happened if Jesus had stayed in Jerusalem? Every folk, every faith, by every season, hundreds upon thousands of people would be rushing to Jerusalem to see him. And if you and I would suddenly say we're going to see him, you talk about a queue

for dinner.

Why, we'd never let you in, would we? We'd never be able to see him. Blessed be God, he has ascended into glory, it was expedient that he should go, for he has gone there to enter out one who can make his presence real in our lives, not from distance away, where we can visit him occasionally, but make his presence out there, moment by moment, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, and blessed be his name till the end of the journey, when in glory we shall see him. Oh brethren, sisters, let's thank God that Jesus ascended into heaven.

And because he has ascended, because he has been glorified, he has sent you up to Holy Spirit. Oh blessed be his name for this great gift. Now I will be talking a little about the work of the Spirit before we finish, but could I just say this here and now, and I think it's most important, I must say it, you've heard it said to you a hundred times, I must say it again.

When we speak of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen in the birth of the Lord Jesus, produced by the Spirit, we are talking of a person, not of an influence, but a person. Never let us forget this, for if you do, you'll never be in trouble. You do not receive a person in just an instant, do you? You receive a person in his entirety.

I think it's important for us to remember that. I will be emphasizing that maybe on another occasion. But here is the expediency of the return of the Lord, at least the ascension of the Lord.

So then let's look for a moment at the ease of his ascension. The twenty-fourth chapter of Luke comes to enclose with words like these, And he lifted up his hands and he blessed them. And while as he was in the process of blessing them, he received up in the glory, all the ease of his ascension glory.

And there he leaped about as far as the Bethany and he lifted up his hands and he blessed them. Have you ever done what I have done? Have you ever wondered why ever he led them as far as Bethany? I can think of a least of the places he could have led them to. Oh tell me, why did not this blessed Christ lead them as far as Bethlehem? The chanting angels had told of his birth.

Why didn't he lead them as far as Mount Cable? For we've been thinking already, as we have talked indeed, of his transfiguration, that it was there at Mount Cable that a celestial being hovered in homage before him. Why was it he didn't lead them as far as Chaldea? For had not the Roman lords of the olden days proclaimed to all that this was God of all blessed forever? Why didn't he lead them to the Temple Court? The chicane of glorious Chaldea, and all its wonder in this place? No, it was not to Bethlehem, or to Calvary, or to Mount Cable. It was not to the Temple Court that he led them.

But he led them out as far as Bethany. Oh, isn't that wonderful? Don't you feel you ought to just praise God? For my youngest friend knows this, that Bethany was the place of his deepest sorrow. But hallelujah, it will be the place of his greatest joy, the place of his deepest sorrow.

It is only twice recorded in the Gospel that Jesus wept. Only twice recorded that Charles Grant was the sorrow that came upon him that the tears ran down his face. Once he wept over one man, once he wept over a picketed man.

Once he wept over a dead man, once he wept over a living man. But on the both occasions that in the Gospels it's recorded that Jesus wept, he was at Bethany. He wept at Bethany over the grave of Lazarus.

He wept at Zephariah's in the distance before the whole cities of Jerusalem, and cried, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ye who stole of the prophets. There is one other occasion in Holy Writ where we quote that Jesus wept. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, with strong, crying ears, and there is little doubt that he's speaking of Bethany.

Now, where is Bethany? It wasn't at Jerusalem. It was hard to Bethany. And the scene of his greatest sorrow, the scene of his greatest sorrow, the Bible says of Bethany, and he leads them out to the scene of his greatest sorrow, that one day will be the scene of his greatest joy.

The hallelujahs we saw this morning, he's coming back again, having caught his own to be with him. After that time, when indeed there will be the judgment seat of Christ, the very supper of the Lamb, and the presentation of the Father, hallelujah, he's coming back again, and he's coming, and he shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. The mountains shall split asunder, and Jerusalem in that day shall be as before.

Blessed be God, back to the Mount of Olives, back to the place of his sorrow, to show his offering. He leads them out to a place of sorrow. They're going to know sorrow, aren't they? They're saying goodbye again.

And he leads them to the place that will tell his greatest joy, for out of his sorrow comes our succor and our joy. He leads them as far as Bethany, and he lifts up his hands. I like that, don't you? I like that.

Do you know there are so many lovely handguns, and how many times they've made the outcrosser on you, and they're crossing through heaven's path, and turning through heaven's gates, and the heartaches, and fears, and anguish, and all kinds of things you face, standing somewhere in the shadows. You'll find him. He's the only one who cares and understands.

Standing somewhere in the shadows, you'll find him. You'll know him by the nail prints in his hands. He leads them out as far as Bethany, and he lifts up his hands.

Wonderful hands. Rooted for me. Wonderful feet nailed to the street.

Wonderful eyes, lovely within. Wonderful heart, broken by faith. He leads them, and he lifts up his hands.

And I wonder what those delightful thoughts, when they looked at that, the only thing that man ever made that would be in glory, was they looked at those scars in his hands. No wonder he could like them. No wonder.

A refreshing scream. Now throw those helmets. What too well belongs by God's decree, an omen has been made.

For the guilty race. Repentance has been paid. Oh, wonder.

Lifted up his hands. Lifted up his hands. I say, what's he not doing? What's he not done? What's he yet to do? What's he not doing? What the patriarch has done in the years that will last? Do you remember the tale of time? The tale of time when the eighth father of Jacob.

Rather, the eighth Jacob. No. The tale of time when the eighth father of Jacob was going to blast Jacob's tons.

Do you remember what happened? And oh, I dare suggest it to you. That just as in that day, hands were lifted to bless. So the hands of Jesus were lifted to bless.

To bless you. And to bless you. If he ever wishes to do that.

He lifted up his hands and he blessed them. Oh, here was the very eve of his ascension. And we praise God this very day, do we not? That just as he blessed him where he went to glory.

So the word of God comes in all its thrill to our heart. That as he went, so he's coming. He went in blessing.

And hallelujah, he's coming back again in blessing. But if we have thought a little of the expediency of his ascension. And we have thought a little of the eve of his ascension.

I wonder if we could say just a little about the eyewitnesses of his ascension. He ascended into glory. And in the eleventh verse of the first chapter of Acts.

If we go down that chapter, we read these words. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven. Shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

You will notice of course in verse 10 that we are told that there were found there two names. In both the powers. I think this is rather important to know.

You see, I learned long ago, and I'm sure you did. I learned long ago that God does what he asks us to do. Could I repeat that? God does what he asks us to do.

For instance, you remember in the Old Testament, God gave the great statement and law concerning evidence. He told us that we must never accept the word of one man. The testimony of one man.

It is in the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word shall be established. Now God does not tell us that we must not accept the word of one man, but only the word of two. Unless he himself gives two witnesses to every divine truth that's essential for our salvation.

And never you forget that. If you forget that, you've been running the peril of hell. It is because of this, these people that call themselves Latter-day Saints have come with their baptism of the dead, and they have taken one or two of her, and they've built what they call a doctrine upon it.

But it is in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Have you noticed how completely God has done this? He wants you and I to accept that Jesus Christ is his son. So he gives two witnesses at the baptism of Christ.

The third day of the Sabbath, and he himself, I've heard you praise Christ, my beloved Christ. So we have the two-fold witness as to the loyalty of Christ. We have the two-fold witness, in Genesis, as to the rejection in Christ.

The lines of transfiguration as we've taught already, there appear two, Moses and Elias, and they face off at the feet that he should have come to Jerusalem. There is the two-fold witness as to his resurrection. Remember yesterday we were thinking how the angel came, he's not here, he's with us, and it was true.

One pat on the front and the other at the head, when Jesus was laid. And so we have the two-fold witness as to his loyalty. The two-fold witness as to his redemption.

The two-fold witness as to his resurrection. But here, bless God, the two-fold witness as to his return. And there's got two men in greater power which said, this plain Jesus shall not come in like that.

Oh, we have not followed cunningly devised angels. Here what God requires of us, he himself has done, and has given us the two-fold witness. I don't know who these two men were, do you? Oh, I can allow my imagination to run away with me.

By the way, they weren't angels, were they? I mean, it says so, doesn't it? I mean, I don't know about your Bible, but my Bible says this, that there stood two men stood by in greater power. Two men. And I assure you the word men there is men.

Is men. I don't think they were angels. I once heard a dear brother, and I must put it that way, because if I didn't, you'd come to me afterwards and ask me for chalice first.

But I can't give it, I'm repeating what someone else said. But I once heard someone say that these two men were the two men that appeared with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elias.

And those men who tasted death, the dead in Christ shall rise first. And Elias, who was caught out of the chariot, the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive shall remain. And the coming of the Lord shall be caught up, not tasted.

No, I don't know if that's right. I only know this, that my party's glad. Glad that there were two messengers that came from God, and they dared to say that a man of Galilee, wise Panji, gave him up.

Don't you realize there's something to do? Don't you realize, indeed, that this Jesus is coming down today? There's no need for thine heart to be broken. There's no need, indeed, for you to be cast down. This Jesus shall come again in light, in like manner.

Oh, I bless God for this. For those who were the eyewitnesses of attention, for those, indeed, who in this deed have walked with him, these men of Galilee, here were some of his disciples, here were some who, for fear of the Jews, had bolted and fired the door of a room. And yet they have seen the Christ as he stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you.

They have come to realize that it was true. Now they see him as standing in the heavens. And, oh, the wonder of it all, that they have touched their lives as it should touch your life and my life today, brethren and sisters.

Then, of course, there's the extent of his ascension. As I come to a close, may I say this to you, that if you were to ask me how high Christ has ascended, all I can do is quote the scripture to you and leave it at that. All I can say is the words of Hebrews 7 and 26.

He is made higher than the heavens. If you ask me how high, how far he has gone, then I can quote to you the words of Ephesians 1 and 21, and I can dare say to you that God sent him, power above principalities and power. Oh, he has ascended into heaven.

And because he has ascended into heaven, we can praise God the day that he's available for us. Available for us. We were reminded yesterday, were we not, a little of the high priesthood of the Christ.

We were reminded of the wonderful fact that Jesus Christ is a high priest. And it's the power throughout our hearts to share with us something of the truth of God in this matter. But may I draw to a close by just passing one or two simple observations about the high priesthood of Christ.

The Bible tells me that he is a high priest. He can stand after the order of Melchizedek, a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Now Melchizedek wasn't a Jew.

Remember that. But Melchizedek had neither beginning of day nor end of day. And isn't it wonderful to know that Jesus Christ has ascended into heaven and is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

He's always there. And if that's all the Bible said of the high priesthood of Christ, I would shout hallelujah! But he's not only a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, for you young people listening out there. Are you listening? For this is the most important thing I've said tonight.

He is not only a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, but he's a high priest after the pattern of error. If he, Melchizedek, had never been born, the concentration camp, Melchizedek would have never known what it meant to live ha-ha and kick and sworn at and beaten. Melchizedek never knew what it meant with tears running down his face to think of the ground and make his groans hard to heaven.

But Aaron did. Aaron had been born in a concentration camp in Egypt. Aaron had known the whip of the taskmaster had caught his back.

Aaron had had his hopes built to high heaven and dashed to the ark as his brother started out to be indeed a missionary and turned out to be a murderer. Aaron again and again and again and again had seen the pain and suffering that comes from men and women who seek to turn God into sin. And I have a high priest in heaven.

And hallelujah, he's there forever. A high priest for all of forever. Praise God, he's not only after the order of Melchizedek, but he's after the pattern of it.

And I have a high priest who comes in touch with the feeling of our eternity because he was at one point tempted such as we yet later. Do you know what it means to live ha-ha and did not look pitiful of men that led him away to Calvary run down his face? Do you know what it means to be laughed at and jeered, and say to others, ha-ha, let him say in his cell that they despised the chosen of God? Do you know what it means to be suffocated? Did they not blindly forgive and smite him? Do you know what it means to pass through all the pain and suffering of this thing? Sister, brother, he's in heaven and he knows it all. And he's my high priest, and he's ascended to glory.

There's not a pain that comes to my heart. There's not a problem that comes to my life. There's not a problem where I have to tread.

And I have a Savior as glorious as he never was. Dare I say it's my problem? Oh, oh, lead me up to heaven's height to see the Lord enthroned in light, that, gazing on his glory there, I may reflect his image here. Couldn't we pray? God and Father were utterly amazed at the loneliness of his life, at the muddliness of his life, at the loneliness of his death.

But we rejoice together tonight in the loveliness of his exaltation. We praise thee that God hath given him a name which is above everything. And in his glory today, there's found a high priest.

How blessed he was as a high priest. We thank thee for our empathy. We thank all that we've left him in his high priest.

We ask thee that thou ever grant that we might understand that he's available for us. We bless thee, friend. Not just walking the streets in this world where only a few can talk near him.

But he has been talking to the right hand of God. And he's available for us. God grant that we might avail ourselves of him.

We ask him in his name. Amen.

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