

# Bristol Conference 1977-02 msg.and Man of Model Ch.

by Stan Ford

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of bold, Bible-based preaching in the context of a model church and the personal relationship with Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 36:01

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1

**Topics:** "Gospel Preaching", "Faithful Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the message of the Gospel in a friendly and bold manner. He refers to the early apostles who proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ and how they presented Christ to the people. The preacher also mentions his own experience of studying the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles and noticing that none of them specifically focused on the love of God. However, he emphasizes that the Gospel is a trust given by God to be used for others, and it should be administered faithfully.

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## Transcript

Uh, there was one thing Mr. Ruth asked me to do. Uh, uh, the tapes are ready, you know. He's got a whole pile of them all set up, and I'm certain of this, that as far as, uh, Mr. Morgan's tapes are concerned, you'll want them.

That one statement that he made, that it isn't horizontal, it's perpendicular. That's worth buying half a dozen tapes to learn that. Right.

Now, how much did you say they were, Mr.? \$2.75. \$2.75, and then 50 cents on top of that for each of us? Or something like that, anyway. You buy them. Oh my, look at that.

Ah, no, but joking aside, uh, I don't know how you feel, but whenever I go to a conference and I listen, I don't take it all in. I'm a bit dull. I remember the high points, and, uh, by that's grand.

But it's the low points that make the high points. You remember the 11th chapter of Deuteronomy? The land whither thou goest to possess it is a land of hills and valleys. And sometimes to listen to the message twice enables you to get the valley in as well as the hills.

I want to read, if I may please, a few verses from the second chapter of 1 Thessalonians. We're going to look, and it will have to be a very brief look, but we're going to look at chapters 2 and 3 today, if we may. We've been considering that model church, and today we're going to consider a little more of the message and the men of that model church.

The message and the men of that model church. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain. But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

For our exaltation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts. Shall we ask God's blessing? O God and Father, again we want to lift our heart to thee and thank thee for the joy of fellowship.

Praise thee that thou didst ever bring us, not only to thyself, but to one another. We ask that each one of us, as the result of these days of being together, may find ourselves like the spokes of a wheel, the nearer to the hub, the nearer to one another. So make the Lord Jesus real to us, we pray, and grant that we may be real one to another, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. There are one or two very obvious things in the second and third chapters that I want, if I may be permitted, just to pass a comment or two concerning. The first thing I want to draw to your notice is that which, as we read those verses, I'm sure you said, Amen to.

First of all, I want to remind you of a bold message that was preached by a bold people. What were the words that we read? Bold in our God to preach unto you the gospel. Now, if there is one thing that should mark an assembly of God's people, it is that none of us are ashamed of that gospel.

That is the message that comes with all the boldness of heaven, and each one of us should be prepared to be bold in the telling for, in our life as one of our lips, that message. The second thing I want to remind you, that this was a message that was preached by a bold people, for it was a bold message. But this is a message that was a Bible-based message, preached by a Bible-loving people.

We are living in a day, are we not, when even in evangelical circles, men and women are very apt to tell forth a message that has its basis maybe in modern need, maybe in the local newspaper, maybe in the things that are the problems of the day, and yet not based upon the word of God. Now if there is one thing I am absolutely persuaded of, it is this, that there is nothing in the world that can meet modern need like the old preaching of the gospel according to the Bible. We are living in a day when men are continually talking about making contact with.

They are always speaking indeed about those who are able to communicate one with another. I know of no better way to communicate with men and women than in the words of God, because God made man and God knows the need of man in any age. Then I want us to notice, not only was it a bold message preached by bold people, not only was it a Bible-based message preached by Bible-loving people, but it was a befriending message preached by a friendly people.

For we will be making reference, of course, to verse 7, and we will see that the apostle could say that we were gentle among you. We will be making reference to verse 8, affectionately desirous of you. And we will see that here is the most befriending message in the world, for it tells of a God who longs for a

relationship with his people.

But it tells us that that friendly God desires that we shall preach that message in a friendly way. First of all, then, let us think of this bold message preached by a very bold people. We were bold in our God to preach the good news, the gospel.

It is not necessary for us to remind our hearts that when we consider together those who in the early days proclaimed this gospel, whether it was Simon, or Stephen, or Saul, that each one of them proclaimed this wonderful fact that Jesus Christ could meet the need of men and women. They presented Christ to the people. I have spent, over the past years, quite a little time in the county of Cornwall in my country.

There are very few assemblies there, at least there were very few before we went down there, and there are still not a great number. There are a few more. But the first time I went to Cornwall years ago, I went down to a little town of Halston.

Very ancient, very ancient town. I knew that years ago, when Wesley went into Cornwall, and God blessed with mighty revival, and Great Britain was saved from what happened in France in their desperate revolution, I knew that Wesley went to Halston. And so I did what I always do when I'm in Cornwall.

I opened Wesley's journal to his visit to Halston. And this is what he wrote. Visiting the little town of Halston, he wrote, I offered Christ to the people.

Now look, I offered Christ to the people. Brethren, sisters, there is nothing in the world that we have to offer to men and women that can meet their need but Jesus Christ. Oh, let us see that our message is saturated with him.

Is not the Bible saturated with him? Why, when I open my Bible, I am not unmindful that he is prefigured in the offerings. But I take those offerings and think it is not just of the physical things that were offered, but the one of whom they speak. I see Christ prefigured in the offerings.

I see him predicted in the prophets. I'm not unmindful that when the prophets spoke, they spoke of particular need in that day and in that age. But they spoke more than that.

For beginning at Moses and the prophets, he spake unto them the things concerning himself. Oh, praise God, he's not only prefigured in the offerings, he is not only predicted in the prophets, but he's presented in the gospel. I open my Bible and I ponder those glorious gospels, and I realize that here is Christ in all the wonder of his person as he moved amongst men and women.

And I don't care who you are, but if you will read the gospels, you cannot help but be attracted to Jesus Christ as a man, let alone a savior. But if I see him indeed prefigured in the offerings, if I see him predicted in the prophets, if I see him presented in the gospels, I hear him preached in the acts. But I see men and women go forth and they tell of a Christ who died, who was raised from the dead, who lives, and hallelujah, one day will come to judge.

This Jesus whom men crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ. God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through this man. Be it known unto you men and brethren that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin.

Oh brethren, sisters, this is the message, this bold message, this message that tells us that God has broken into the affairs of men, that God is concerned about folk going on the broad road that leads to destruction, that God desireth not the death of any, but that all should come to him and live. Friend, what more could God do than he has done? And his son, that blessed one, took our sins in his own body on the tree. You know, I feel almost like saying again the words of the little Welsh chorus, do you wonder why it is I love him so? And I think of all he's done, and for me the guilt he won.

Do you wonder why it is I love him so? You know, Mr. Morgan's got a father who's a Welshman, and yet they asked us if we'd sing. We'd better sing that in Welsh, do you know that in Welsh, Mr. Morgan? Jokin' old bit of coffee, old No, sir, not a queer Welshman doesn't know his own father. Oh, I only know this, do you wonder why it is I love him so? Brethren, sisters, the need of assembly life today, would you please listen, the need of assembly life today is that we might come to love the Lord Jesus as a person more than ever before.

It is not just that we shall come to love the doctrines of the Bible, thank God for them. Not that we shall come to love the doctrines of the church, thank God for them, we love them. But that Jesus Christ as a person might be real to us, real to us.

Is he real to you? Does he walk with us and talk with us along life's way? Oh, I say, what a message to preach, what a bold message that God has spoken into the affairs of man, and how boldly they preach it. How boldly they preach it. Oh, I love that, don't you? And not boisterously, some of us preach it boisterously.

We are what we are, aren't we? You see, someone said to me just yesterday, one thing was forward, you've got a good loud voice. Oh, wouldn't I be a queer fellow, my size, with a little squeaky voice? We are what we are. And God doesn't want to make you like me, for which you are thankful.

And he doesn't want me to be like you, for which I'm thankful. He wants me to be like his blessed son. He wants to take me and my personality and use it for his glory.

Oh, God grant that while we may have elders as imitators that we might, at least elders as examples, that we might imitate them. It is not imitating them as men, but imitating them as Christians. And here the apostle came and boldly proclaimed the word.

And some of us proclaim it boisterously, and some of us are unable to do that, but we proclaim it maybe more effectively because we are what we are. God grant that we may realize this. Would you notice something more? That they proclaimed it boldly for three reasons.

Verse three, they realized it was a message of truth. I rather like J.B. Phillips' paraphrase. I was going to say translation, not translation, but J.B. Phillips' paraphrase of that particular expression.

He says, our message is true and our motives are pure. Isn't that lovely? Our message is true and our motives are pure. They recognized this message as truth.

And who'd be ashamed of truth? What is truth, one asked long ago? Praise God, we know what is truth, for he is truth, and we proclaim Christ. They noticed it was not only truth and so they preached it boldly, but they preached it boldly because they realized it was a message of trust. Would you notice verse four? We were allowed of God, says Paul.

We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel. Now, do we recognize this message as a trust? To use this expression in its very simple modern term, although the term is much broader, but to use it in a modern term that we will all understand. You know what a trust is.

People set up a trust that someone else may place into that trust something for another person. A trust. Sometimes maybe a fellow of mine.

They place that money in a trust that it shall be used for a cause for others. Isn't it lovely to think of the gospel as a trust? But God put it there to be used for others, and we are there to administer the trust. Don't forget that trustees one day have to give an account, and one day I've got to stand before God and God will say, what did you do with that trust? No wonder they preached it boldly.

They realized that one day they would take the one that had placed this glorious truth into their hand. They preached it not only as a truth, they preached it not only for they realized it was a trust, they preached it because they knew it was a test. A test.

Verse 15. You know, as I read that this morning, my heart was strangely challenged. It says, who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us, and they pleased not God, and are contrary to all men.

Now here is a message that's a test. Do we please God? What is our attitude to Christ? Do we crucify unto ourselves again the Christ of glory? What is our attitude? Is it the attitude of a man or woman who says, Lord, Lord, I know what men did to thy son and I know he endured it for me, but oh God, I see my guilt in his death. And I test myself and I come to realize what an awful person really I am, all wretched man that I am.

Brethren, sisters, we'll never think more of ourselves than we should if we constantly keep before us the message of Calvary. Oh, what a wonderful fact, a bold message preached by bold people. Now, let's come to this model church, you know, ours, ours, ours.

Brethren, sisters, do we hold and hold firmly to the fact that God's given us truth? Tell me, do we, and each one of us here, do we realize that we have it as a trust and are responsible to God to administer it to others? Tell me, do we test ourselves constantly by it as to our attitude to others and our attitude to God? But then, of course, it was not only a bold message preached by bold people, but praise God, it was a Bible-based message preached by Bible-loving people. As I've already said, when one opens the story of the Acts of the Apostles, especially when one comes to those stories that surround the establishment of the church at Thessalonica, we find that whoever preached the Word preached the Word based upon Scripture. Now, this always thrills me.

Could I remind you of something that sometimes we're apt to forget? I believe that the message of the Gospel is the greatest love story in the world. But one of the things that struck me very forcibly when first I was converted, what I did was this, you see. One of the things when I say first I was converted, I mean two or three years ago.

But I took my pen and my notebook, I opened the Acts of the Apostles, and I said, now, they really preached the Gospel then, for churches were founded and souls were saved. Now, I'm going to try and trace the text that the preachers and the Acts of the Apostles had for their sermon. And there were thirteen sermons in the Acts of the Apostles, and it's remarkable that there's not one of them about the love of

God.

Do you know that hit me? Oh, I thought, now, now, now, now, those folk are going to take for their text, God is love. What I found was that almost every sermon had its basis completely in the fulfillment of God's promises. That God had made statements and promises that in His Son they would be found salvaged.

Oh, how essential it is when you and I stand that we shall stand and make sure that what we proclaim, oh now, God is love, it's the message of the Bible, don't misunderstand Let us remember that its basis is found in Holy Writ, that we shall present Christ of the Bible to men and women. Three things, very quickly, three things that the Apostle reminded them of. First of all, verse 8 and 9, he reminded them that it was the Gospel of God, that God was its source, that man and God was its subject, and God with man and man with God was its sequence.

It's the Gospel of God. Why, no, later it's called the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On one occasion the Apostle said it's my gospel.

I like that, don't you? I like that. My gospel. Oh, but here it's the Gospel of God.

Would you notice that it was not only the Gospel of God, verse 13, but the Word of God, for this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received not the Word of men, as it is in truth, but the Word of God. In this day, when folk are always talking about communicating, a number of things strike me. That when the Apostle and others, whether it was the Apostle Peter or the Apostle Paul, when they proclaimed the Gospel, they proclaimed it as it was written in the Scripture.

The story of Peter before Cornelius always attracted me. Now, Cornelius was a Roman. Cornelius was a man of sophistication.

Cornelius was a ruler in the sense of a ruling over his soldiers. He was a general. Now, in our modern day, in our preaching schools, they would say, now you must always be able to communicate.

Here's a Roman, so you must speak to him in the phraseologies he will understand. You know his manner of life, you know his background, you must suit the message to him. And Peter said, and he stood in front of him, to this man, the Lord Jesus, they're all the prophet's witness.

Now, just a moment, Peter, whoa, whoa, whoa. What does a Roman know about Jews and Jewish prophets? Those prophets spoke for the Jews. What does he know? He never tried to adapt the message for his audience.

He preached the message of the Word of God, and it went home. It went home. It's been my joy, as some of you know, to have preached the gospel in this and maybe 32 or 33 other countries.

Quite often the crowds of folk who can't understand one word I say just have to speak through interpretation. Of course, some people don't need interpretation and don't understand what I say. But nevertheless, often through interpretation.

And when I return home and give my report to my own assembly, many a time brethren have said something like this, Sam, what sort of message is it you bring? How do you adapt to these folk whose background, whose social condition is so different to ours? And all I can say is I preach exactly the same

to them as I do to you. In fact, do you know something more? They understand it as well, because that's what the Word of God is all about. It's God's message to all men.

God knows the message that'll meet all men better than I know it. And please, may I just say this, don't let us think, don't let us think that when one goes to some of these mission-filled countries, and I'm not sure what I say, but don't let us think that you're talking to folk who are ignorant of the things of God. I stood in Compango in the heart of Angola.

Couldn't understand one word the folk were saying, and I sat and grinned at them. There's one thing I've smiled great through any national barrier, really quickly. And day by day, we'd start at six in the morning and I was still speaking at ten at night.

And of course, I was doing it, and Water Cannon was doing it, because he had it translated all the time. And apart from maybe an hour's break, we were at it all the time, and some of the folk had walked 120 miles a minute. And in the morning I took them through Bible characters, and in the afternoon I took them through the epistle to the Corinthians, and in the evening I took them through the epistle to the Ephesians, and we went, I'm sorry, the epistle to the Hebrews, and we went through day after day, day after day.

And the first day, when I started on the epistle to the Hebrews, I passed a comment, and in the course of my remarks I mentioned that Paul had written the epistle to the Hebrews. It was thrown out as a question, the very first question, in the heart of Africa and Angola, the very first question I was asked, Mr. Paul, how do you know Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews? I want to tell you something. The brethren that have labored in these lands have taught the Word of God.

And I sometimes have been utterly amazed at the knowledge of some of these questions. Thank God for men like Ernest Wilson. Thank God for women like, uh, she's changed her name as well.

What was it? Pardon? Mrs. Short. Ah, Mrs. Short. Betty Baby, of course.

I knew her, and she was married. But, folks that have left for God are people well taught in the things of God. And when Communism comes, the Word of God and the work of God continues, because the Word of God's been preached.

And that's suitable to every occasion. Would you notice it was not only the gospel of God and the words of God, but the churches of God. Verse 14, ye became followers of the churches of God which are in you, dear, and in, and of, I'm sorry, and in Christ Jesus.

I think that's lovely. That's where we started, wasn't it? In Christ Jesus. And here are the churches in Christ Jesus.

I think that's wonderful. Oh, to realize this, that here's a Bible-loving people preaching a Bible-based message in Christ Jesus. I don't suppose they knew it in those days, did they? But if they did, you know, I got a feeling that those, that church at Thessalonica would have stood up, the song leader, Brother Redland of that day would have stood up and sung, this world is not my home, I'm just a passing through.

Oh, I say, they knew something, didn't they? But then notice, and I should finish, would you notice this, please? That not only was it a bold message preached by bold people, it was not only a Bible-based message preached by Bible-loving people, but it was a befriending message preached by friendly people. Could there be a message more friendly than this? That God desires that men shall be reconciled unto

him, and that he has done everything that we might be reconciled. Oh, how friendly those folk were.

Verse 7, as we've already made reference, we were gentle among you. I like that. Gentlemenly, gentlemenly.

Dear Brother in our meeting used to have the habit of saying, a Christian should be a gentleman, a gentleman. And it wasn't just in our homes, you know, but it was in our assembly that that was taught. To me, it seems as though it's not being taught quite so much.

Maybe I should be teaching it more by my example, more than by my words. This dear Brother, dear Mr. Heather, he was a gentlemanly man, and if he ever saw those young men do anything that was not gentlemanly, he'd put his hand on their shoulder and say, a Christian should be a gentleman. If he ever saw a young man push through the door in front of a girl, he'd go straight after him.

A man. What did he ever say? He'd bring us back. He'd say, would you mind opening the door? In the--ooh--in the assembly.

Affectionately desirous of you, he says in verse 8. Affectionately desirous. By the way, let me just say this. Let me say this.

That the first time in 1950 when I came to your lovely land, I had the privilege of staying with Mrs. Baranowski and Mr. Baranowski. I have many memories of Mr. Baranowski, but the memory I have is of a gentleman. Gentleman.

Not only this gentle among you, but affectionately desirous of you. And then in verse 9 he said, well, we wouldn't be chargeable unto you. Oh, I say, isn't this friendly? We won't be chargeable unto you.

The apostle would be willing there to labour with his hands to do a task to provide that, that he would not be burdensome to the people of God. Now if we know anything about the church at Thessalonica, we know this, that they would have borne the burden and borne it willingly. But he was seeking to be friendly.

I am more persuaded today than I was the last time I was with you and preached about it, that if there's a man that is in the service of God, that man should be a worker. Not a shirker, not a jerker, but a worker. I have a God who dares to say this, that a man shall not eat if he will not work.

That is true of men who are in the service of God. If you find that I'm not working, please tell me. Let us still find me a job to do and I'll try and do it.

He goes on and he dares to say, we exult in comfort as a father doth his children. He said, we're taken from you, but not in heart. That's lovely, isn't it? That's lovely.

I don't want to stop, but I've got to. Oh, sir, Mr. Jack Waller, if you like. Oh, no, brother Dick, there's no need for you to do it now.

I only know this. Brethren, in the simplest of terms, and I could only be that, in the simplest of terms, may I say this, that I don't believe that there could ever be anything better than a Bible-based assembly. It is the only answer in a world of change to find that which changes not the principles of a church, that boldly we go to men and women with the bold message of heaven.

That as Bible-loving people, we take not our message, but the message of the Bible to men and women. That as a friendly people, we take the most friendly message in the world to a people. In other words, we seek to be a little kinder, a little blinder to the thoughts of those around us, and praise God.

If from this conference we will go back to our assembly determined to put that into practice, pray it may be. Shall we pray? God and Father, we feel so humbled before thee. When we look at the example of these dear saints in Thessalonica, we realize how far short sometimes we have come.

We pray for the grace to go from this place, to make the assembly with which we are connected a living, vital force in the era in which it's found, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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