

Bristol Conference 1977-03 Msg, and Man of Model Ch.

by Stan Ford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that is pleasing to God, loving one another, and laboring in quietness and diligence, as we await the coming of Christ.

Duration: 45:42

Scripture: John 13:34, John 14:1, Romans 14:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, James 5:16

Topics: "Resurrection Hope", "Christian Encouragement"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the importance of living a life that pleases God. He then moves on to discuss the need for believers to bring comfort to others and to offer thanks to the Lord. The sermon then transitions to chapter four of 1 Thessalonians, where the speaker focuses on our attitude towards the present and our assurance of the future. The speaker highlights the belief in the resurrection of Jesus and the promise that those who sleep in Jesus will be brought with Him. The sermon concludes with an exhortation to encourage one another with these words.

Transcript

I'm not sure what's going to happen afterwards, Matthew. If we may, please, the fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, if we may, and what glorious words they are.

Fourteenth, the fourth verse of, fourth chapter, I'm sorry, of 1 Thessalonians, and we will commence reading in verse 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so then also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him? For this we say unto you by the words of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort absorbs one another with these words. The Lord will bless his word to our hearts, I'm sure.

We're going to sing the little chorus first off the sheet. There's a great day coming. There's a great day coming, please.

No need for me to remind you of a little of that on my heart tonight. So please it's number, what number is it? Eleven is it? Oh yes, number eleven. That's some good singing and if you believe it's true, let's hear you really ring it out.

There's a great day coming, thank you. There's a great day coming, a great day coming, a great day coming for us all. Quite good.

Well not bad. Hands up those that couldn't have sung a bit better if you'd tried. Oh there's a nice row, would you like to come up the front? Well that's most of you, maybe you could sing a little better.

Let's try it out. There's a great day coming by and by. Do you know brothers and sisters, I don't think we get excited enough about it.

To realise that Jesus Christ may come back at any moment. Or that we may be ready. There's a great day coming, are you ready there? There's a great day coming, a great day coming, a great day coming for all of us all.

Now, where's our banjo player? Oh thank you Mark, thank you sir. Thank you. I was told, I don't know why, we didn't sing our good morning.

We'll be fine, thank you dear. I'd like to have a little bit of music. Yes sir, yes, hold on, hold on.

Ah, if they can't be heard to hear, would you mind? You wouldn't like to do that? Well point when I'm supposed to turn, will you? Well just you singing, that should be coming to that. Well how am I singing? Well hold it high enough and then your voice is on there. I can't see the words.

Good, good. Thank you. Which does bring me to the second point.

That I think you have a set of notes, have you from the last night brother? Many of you were interested, our brother has them. I think they're free now, are they sir? Are they? Well you heard him. Mr. Ruth, Mr. Ruth, did you take a copy of that beautiful duet? You did sir? What price is that sir? Brother, we thought we were going away millionaires.

There we are. But joking aside, I believe the tapes are ready for any of you listening here. Shall we pray? Again dear Lord, we do ask thee that thou will give to each one of us such a sense now of the presence of the Lord that it may be easy both to listen and to retain and act upon that which thou hast before us in thy work.

Speak to us then for Jesus' sake. Amen. You will have noticed of course that I have jumped to chapter.

For the very obvious reason that days pass so quickly. But if I may be permitted just to pass a very brief, and it will be brief, comment about chapter 3. It seems to me that if I would write anything over the third chapter of 1 Thessalonians, I would write this. That absence makes the heart grow fonder.

The apostle Paul has left Thessalonica. But as he is away from those that he's come to love in Christ, his heart is continually drawn towards them. And there comes a day when he decides that he must know something of them.

And so young Timothy goes back to Thessalonica. And brings to the apostle Paul eventually news of what was happening in the church. The apostle, in now writing this letter to them, has much to say of praise and something of correction and very much of warning.

Warning of things that could happen for he'd seen them happen in other places. Not that they had arisen necessarily in Thessalonica, but they were words of warning. I reminded you the other day, did I not, of that wonderful little story of the founder of the pilgrim preacher.

Who placed into the center of a ring a man who had been saved from a life of absolute wickedness and sin. And the crowd that gathered around, and big crowd it was, were just thrilled as they heard how God in wondrous grace had stooped down and rescued a miserable wretch from going down to the pit. And I confess as I stood there in that ring and listened, I thought I wouldn't like to have to follow that.

Then dear daddy lost the founder of the pilgrim preacher. As only he could, he walked in the center of the ring, stroked his white beard and said, You know friends, it is better to have a fence at the top of the cliff than an ambulance underneath. We have listened to a man who needed an ambulance, and Jesus Christ was the ambulance.

Now we are going to listen to a man for whom Jesus Christ was the fence, stopped him from ever falling over the cliff. He placed in the ring a man who had been contracted as a child of five years of age. And I can listen to the crowd, or see the crowd now, as not one of them moved on.

They listened to a man who had heard the warnings of God and had trusted Christ. And there are many warnings in one Thessalonians. Paul is putting a fence at the top of the cliff.

He says, Don't fall over, don't fall over. It seems to me there are four things in the third chapter that he says. First of all, he tells them in verse 7 that they are a people that must bring comfort to others.

I will pass no comment about that. They are a people who must bring comfort. Therefore brethren, we were comforted over you.

Would folk look at us and say, Well there's one thing, we will bring comfort to others. As they see our godly walk. Then will you notice that they not only had to bring comfort, but they had to stand fast.

In verse 8 he says, Now we live if we stand fast in the Lord. No, no, not get light, we live. We live.

You see the just shall live by faith. If not only the just shall get light by faith, the just shall live by faith. Knowing Jesus Christ, giving one's life to him, allowing the spirit of God not to be grieved in our being.

It is that that makes life just wonderful. I can think of very little more insipid than a life without Jesus Christ. I'll be speaking in the coming week about some of the similes of the saints.

And so I will leave it now, sufficient to say God wants us to stand fast. We must show men and women that we have life and life abundance in Jesus Christ. He exhorts them to comfort, to stand fast.

And then please, he exhorts them to offer thanks in verse 9. What thanks can we render to God? He wants us to render our thanks to the Lord and continually. Then we remember, please, that he exhorts them to pray one for another. But with your permission I would like to pass over chapter 3 and come down to chapter 4. It appears to me that it divides into two parts.

First it deals with our attitude to the present. And then it deals with our assurance of the future. Our attitude to the present and our assurance of the future.

As he opens up this very wonderful, very wonderful chapter, he starts off first of all in verses 1 to 8 by speaking of our loyalty. In verse 1 he says, I want you to walk to please God. Walk to please God.

So here is our loyalty, not necessarily to one another, to start. That comes in in a moment. But our loyalty to God.

Oh that we might walk to please God. Was it not said of him not he walked with God? And he was not. Oh please let me forget just a moment that God taught him.

And let me ask the question, have I walked with God? Am I one of those of whom people will say they are not? That's a lovely chorus she's walked with, isn't it? We need to let his Christ to die again. So to walk in this scene that we may be not. God may see Christ in me.

To me it was not the truth you taught. To you so clear, to me so dim. When you came you brought a sense of him.

Oh that we might walk and walk to please God. And then we do notice in verse 2 he not only speaks of our loyalty in our walk, but our loyalty in the keeping of the commandments. For he talks of those commandments given by the Lord Jesus.

Given by the Lord Jesus. I'm somewhat apt to say amen when someone says something that I think is good. You will remember that Mr. McKenzie in our afternoon Bible readings made this statement.

He said that he thinks it's almost blasphemous to refer to portions of the word of God as just the writings of Paul. While Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, no one will deny that. But here Paul says this, the commandments are not mine, they're the commandments of the Lord Jesus.

Oh that we might listen to his voice and hear what he has to say. And then would you notice he speaks of our loyalty not only in our walk, and our loyalty not only in our obeying of the commandments. But our loyalty in seeking to say in our life our amen to the will of God which is our sanctification.

Oh that you and I, he says verse 3 surely, oh that you and I might say amen to the will of God. Oh God I desire above all else that as I am sanctified in Christ. Never forget that happens when we trust the Savior.

Christ is made unto us. One of the four things says Corinthians 1.30 that Christ is made. Christ is made unto us.

Sanctification. But please, that's our position. What's our condition? We are set apart in Christ for God.

But are we living it out in our life? Am I walking a sanctified life? Do I start each day and say Lord thank you for another opportunity of living for you. Thank you for this day. Oh friend I think I said this the other evening, if I didn't please, please, please forgive me I ought to have.

But you know I've never enjoyed life more than I'm enjoying it now. I think life's just great. Just great.

I have to face problems the same as you. Difficulties the same as you. I have a family and grandchildren the same as many of you.

But to start each day and say thank you Lord for giving me a chance of just living with you. I hope that doesn't sound sanctimonious and preachers talk. I want to say this to you.

This is the will of God that I might be thanked for. But then he goes further and he dares to tell us that our attitude to the present is that we shall be loyal. But then he speaks not only of our loyalty but verse 9 he speaks of our love.

Why he says such as touching brotherly love. I like that don't you? I like that. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you.

For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. It is years ago now that I was in a Bible reading with E.W. Rogers. And the question was asked while we were in 2 Peter 1. The question was asked add to your faith.

And one of the things that we were exhorted to add was brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness love. The question was asked Mr. Rogers. What is the difference between brotherly kindness and love? Not an easy one to answer is it? Of course you Americans wouldn't appreciate that.

Especially at this time of the year. But Englishmen would. He said well I'll tell you what brotherly kindness is.

Brotherly kindness is on a cold winter night. When you're staying in a home where there's no central heating. And no fire in the bedroom.

You go upstairs and you get into bed. And you find someone's put a hot water bottle there. That's brotherly kindness.

But he said love. Love is when they wrap your pajamas around it. Now that's not me.

That's E.W. Rogers. I only know this. That God expects you and I to show brotherly love.

I have a brother in the flesh. I only have one brother in the flesh. But I have a brother in the flesh.

Boy was converted to Amish when I was fighting. And so you'll appreciate we know one pretty well. Born up together and always together.

But I know something about Bill and he knows things about me. But if you came to me and say I want to tell you something about your Bill. You know what I'd do? I'd take you by the shoulder and say hey that's my brother.

I wonder why it is as Christians when someone comes and tells us about another Christian. We say oh tell us more. Tell us more.

Dare I suggest that brotherly love and love is that which we're needing so much in the church of God today. Not just the words I love you. The actions that prove we do.

But would you notice not only our loyalty and our love but any fix of our labor in verse 11. He says study to be quiet and do your own business. Oh.

Oh. Study to be quiet and do your own business. To work with your own hands.

This labor affects our testimony. This labor affects provision for ourselves and our families. We are living in a day especially in my country and from what I hear maybe a little in your country.

That there has arisen the tendency to try it all. Things are not going too well. Ah well the government there they'll provide for us.

Brethren and sisters. God has not removed the responsibility from Christians to care for themselves in the way of providing and care for their families. Oh I know this that there are some who because of physical disability are unable to provide.

But any nation that's a nation at all will provide for them. There is no sure thing that if I've learned anything in Africa I've learned this. That what used to be the usual thing in Christian circles is seen in heathen circles.

Never once have I come across a person deformed because of cricket. Deformed because of malnutrition. Deformed because of labor and age who's been turned from their home.

The whole family will take them in and care for them. This is what Paul is saying. He's daring to remind us that we have a responsibility to labor and labor our.

God has no place for laziness. And the men and women. I say.

May I say this please as a servant of the Lord in some small measure. That after 32 years of preaching the gospel in this and many other countries. I have come to a conclusion that I believe to be an utter absolute scriptural conclusion.

That if a man does not work neither shall he eat. And that is true among those that labor for the Lord. If we look to the Lord to provide our needs day by day.

Let us remember that he expects us to work. He expects us to serve him and serve him faithfully. If there are some here you young folk who are contemplating the service of the Lord.

Will you remember that if an elder is a man who desires a good work. If you're going to step out into the service of God. Never, never, never insult God or the people of God by being lazy.

I'm glad I said that. But then will you please. He deals in these first chapters as to our attitude to the present.

As to our loyalty. As to our love. As to our labor.

And then he deals with the assurance of the future. And verse 13 right to the end. Oh the wonder of it all.

He starts off and speaks. I do not want you to be ignorant brethren. There are all sorts of brethren in the Bible you have.

Faithful brethren. Ignorant brethren. I never see any blemish brethren there.

But I see all sorts of brethren. I do know this though. I do know this.

That here are brethren that he didn't wish to be ignorant. Now he did not say they were ignorant. He didn't want them to be ignorant.

And you parents that have children. When you gaze at your children you long that they shall. In the academic field reach some standard.

You don't wish them to be ignorant. If that be so in the ordinary affairs of life. How much more so in the things of God.

So the apostle writes. He doesn't want them to be ignorant concerning those that are asleep. He makes an appeal of course to the work of the Lord.

And I think that's wonderful don't you? He makes that tremendous appeal for he says. But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them which are asleep. That ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again. Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

He makes an appeal to Jesus Christ and to the word of God. As if Christ died and rose again. There is nothing he cannot do.

Nothing he cannot do. I say what does the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to you and me? I just scribbled a few words when I was in Durham. I haven't put a tune to it.

Maybe I'll be able to. I want to see him glorified. As heaven's beloved son.

I want to see the saints in joy. The triumph he has won. I want to spread aboard the way the message of the cross.

I want to leave the world behind. And hand it all that's dropped. Well friend I did.

I did. I want to see him glorified as heaven's beloved son. I don't want just to hear men and women walk about and talk about Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Our blessed name Jesus.

I want to see him glorified as heaven's beloved son. I want to see this Jesus whom man crucified. The one that God made both Lord and man.

The appeal is made to his death. Not just to his death of Jesus. But to his resurrection.

The one who rose from the dead. Then he comes to this great wondrous truth of the return of the Lord. And with your permission I want if I may just to say a few very simple things now.

First of all I want to say a word about the promise of his coming. Lagrange. About the promise of his coming.

And then I want to say a word about the period of his coming. I like that. I won't have much to say about that because Father Morgan's been talking about that all these days.

But I want to say a little word about it. I want to say a word not only about the promise of his coming. And a word about the period of his coming.

I want to say a word, maybe two words please, about the purpose of his coming. You know what I'm going to say now don't you? I want to say a word not only about the promise and the purpose. I want to say a word, and the period, I want to say a word about the preparation for his coming.

First a word about the promise of his coming. Let's leave, just for a moment or two, let's leave that fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians. Reminding our heart that the apostle had made reference to the Lord Jesus.

The commandment of the Lord Jesus. Let's go back and talk to the lovely 14th chapter of John. I say, you Sunday school teachers, what do you tell your children in Sunday school class? Don't you gather them around you and say, now let me say a few things about the Lord.

And you turn to the 14th chapter of John, do you not? And you tell them about the tenderness of the Lord. You tell them about the tenderness of the Lord. Let not your hearts be troubled.

For here were believers who wondered what was going to happen next. The Lord places his hand upon them and says, let not your hearts be troubled. Have you not heard me say something like this before? That when you go back into the 13th, the 12th, and the 11th chapters of John, you find this word trouble occurring three times.

And it's associated with the Lord. He was troubled in body. He was troubled in spirit.

He was troubled in soul. When you come to the 14th chapter, the one who is troubled in body, and troubled in spirit, and troubled in soul, is the one who says, let not your hearts be troubled. Or the tenderness of the Lord.

My friend, I want to tell you this. And I believe my Savior was a man, every inch of him a man. He was a surgeon.

He had a lot of hair on his face. Fat on him. He was still able to carry a cross halfway up his head.

Don't you tell me my Savior wasn't a man. He was every inch of him a man. But that man was tender, filled with compassion.

Or the tenderness of the Lord Jesus. Let not your hearts be troubled. I say, have you noticed this? The trustworthiness of the Lord Jesus.

I feel like stopping and shouting hallelujah. I'm a bit frightened in my left hand. I only know this.

I only know this. That the tenderness of the Lord is seen. Let not your hearts be troubled.

But the trustworthiness of the Lord is seen. For he said, if it were not so, I would have told you. If it were not so, I would have told you.

How trustworthy is my Savior. You can believe his word. Rest upon it and act upon it.

How many times to your Sunday school class have you said. Oh how tender was the Lord. How trustworthy was the Lord.

But how thoughtful was the Lord. How thoughtful. As he looked at those who had just taken hold.

For all for him. And he said, ah, but I go and protect in my Father's house of many dwellings. I go and prepare a place for you.

I like that. I didn't go round to see this big house that you went to see yesterday. I have to come into one or two places.

Well all I do is go and have a look at things and see how many things I can live without. You know I mean that's all there is. But every one of you said it's a wonderful place.

Wonderful house. Wonderful house. I'm glad I got a home.

I wouldn't like to live in a big old place like that would you. You ladies wouldn't. Not to do all the dusting.

Oh my. Hear me. I'm glad of this in my Father's house of many dwellings.

And the Apostle Paul he spoke of at home. With Jesus. At home.

I didn't know that. You know I didn't. Oh it's the loveliest word almost in the English language.

At home. But would you notice something more. Not only the promise of His coming.

Let not your hearts be troubled you believing God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house of many mansions.

If it were not so I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again.

And receive you unto myself. And where I am there ye may be also. Now that's the promise of His coming.

Now how about the period of His coming. You know that day by day dear brother Phil has been bringing the signs of the last days before. I'm certain that every one of us has felt that God has been speaking to us.

I don't know about you but I felt myself as he ministered to us last night. Oh Lord. In the middle of days like this.

And I sometimes so awake my God. So awake my God. God forgive me.

Let me go out and tell men and women of you. Let me find myself as one willing to work for the Saviour. For as He has been speaking with us through a number of things surely He said what before.

I may use slightly different words to you sir. And yet say the same thing. It seems to me that He points that there are definite signs after the coming of the Lord.

There are I'm making reference of course to the 24th of Matthew. There are first of all prophetic signs. Signs that deal and deal definitely with the prophecy that He made.

And this is one of the signs that Mr. Morgan dealt with post-harony. That there will arise in those last days some who will say here is the Christ or there. Now that's the word of prophecy.

The Lord said in the last times that will happen. Is it happening today? Mr. McKenzie is off to Nigeria. Just a few years ago in Nigeria they had a great statue.

Oh I'm daft isn't he? Yes. It was the statue of the man who proclaimed himself as President. And at the face of the statue he called himself the Messiah of Nigeria.

Of course he spoke over to him and knocked down his statue. But nevertheless he said here I am. Here I am.

And that's happening all over the world. The world is praying give us a man. And one day God will say right I'll give you a man.

And a man of sin will arise. And there arose a day there were after a man. I know this.

That there are perpetual signs. There are prophetic signs. That there are perpetual signs.

The verse 6 of that chapter speaks of wars and rumors of wars. Now these are perpetual signs. They have ever been with us.

Ever been with us. And yet I have a strong feeling that as we look around the world today there are more rumors than maybe ever there was before. Please sir, in case you didn't know, I'm an Englishman.

The week before I came to America I was in North of Ireland. And there, oh thank God, the work of God is going on. That Lord's Day morning in the Crescent Hall there were 700 of us gathered around the table to remember the Lord.

And that Sunday night I preached to well over a thousand in that hall. Praise God there were those that put faith in Jesus Christ. The work is going on.

But you see I go back to Valdas and my heart is made heavy. I never thought I'd ever see it in our country. I never thought in my land it would ever be known.

I've seen it in Caracas. I've seen it in other parts of the world. But I never thought I'd ever see it in my land.

I would walk down into the center of Belfast and I'd come to the barriers and I'd step through and the soldiers would perch me. And I'd go through again and every shop I'd go into there would be a man at the door that perched me. And every place, small or large, I was perched.

Soldiers going around with tommy guns in their hands. My country. We were hearing this afternoon of Lebanon.

I was in Soweto three days before the bloody uprising. It isn't France. War in the middle of the war.

Not guilty please. Not guilty. I didn't write the Bible.

He said, these are signs of the perpetual. They're with us. They're signs, the Lord says.

Because you see there's no one else can do anything with it. He's the only one. Then will you notice there are not only prophetic signs and perpetual signs, but there are political signs.

For verse seven says, nations shall rise up against nations. As distinct from war, nations shall rise up against nations. If he's speaking in some letter indeed of what is happening in my land, of what is happening in Spain, of what is happening in Portugal, of what is happening in Angola, of what is happening away yonder in Rhodesia, he's telling us that there are nations that will rise up within

themselves against themselves.

I would value the prayers very much. When I finish here in America, I go back home and I'll be going down to the land that Mr. Morgan's father came from. I'll be going down into West Wales.

And I know this, that every day I'll be in a day school speaking to the children, that every school I go to, the headmaster will say the same thing. He'll say, now Mr. Ward, you do understand that none of the children under eight will understand. The Lord will.

No English spoken at all. English but the second language. I'm hoping to go down in some counties where I've been waiting for years for a Welsh preacher to go, and somehow they never go.

So I've got to go down as an Englishman and try and beat their head against the wall. I'd value a prayer for that. It's not going to be easy.

I only know this, that in that little country of mine, never have there been times as there are today, of Welsh nationalists. Every signpost you'll see on the road is written in English and Welsh. So they produced these signposts in answer to the cry of the Welsh nationalists, and they put them up in English and Welsh, and they had them torn down, thick as they had to be in Welsh and English.

So I go to Scotland, and it looks as though Scotland before long will be breaking away from us. The Dutch nationalists have won almost every election. We went to the polls tomorrow.

There's little doubt that there would hardly be anyone but a Scotch nationalist representing Scotland. Or they say we've discovered oil in the top outcomes, not the English ones. Or maybe they have much to say.

I don't know, but what I'm trying to get over is this. Did you ever think that would happen? I never did, and I live there. Did you see that? Not too good a photograph, Mr Mackenzie, sir.

Not too good a photograph, sir. I hope your magazine can do better than that next time. Did you see the photograph in the front of the mystery magazine? I wondered why after two years I hadn't got one, and then they gave me one.

Right on the front was a photograph of two people, dear, dear friends of mine, dear Tommy Wilson, and dear Kenneth. Oh, how many times did he translate it for me when I stood in front of Athens, and I looked at that land of Rhodesia, and I don't wish to enter into the political issues. I only know this.

Nation rising up against nation. Then would you notice something more? There are prophetic, there are political, there are pestilence signs. For verse 7 says cannons and pestilences.

I do hope that every one of you can. We'll see the slides with these. I hope you do.

I'm looking forward with great anticipation to seeing something of the work of God in India, where day by day there are thousands dying of starvation, in this lovely land of yours and my lovely land. And I'm still proud of my land, not ashamed of it in English, but as I look around me I say this, that I don't know if there have ever been times of waste like there are today. We waste more food than would kill the stomachs of hundreds, and we do it in one family in a week.

We don't mean to. But somehow we do. That there is pestilence in this land, that there are physical signs, and diverse places.

But this is but the beginning of far out. I don't know anything about the earthquakes in China, do you? All I know is the little that came out. And what we do know is that there were thousands of people killed in the earthquakes.

I say, isn't it getting dismal? Ah, but it's always darkest before the dawn. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

I say, here is the period that is coming. And I don't know who you are, and I don't know what is your prophetic outlook. I only know this, that no one can read the 24th of Matthew without saying, well, it's very much like the day in which we live.

What's the prophecy? Here is the prophecy. Well, let's go to the 4th. Let's go back there.

Pause it. Are you ready to say hallelujah? Hallelujah. Pause it.

The prophecy is coming. First, praise the saints. First, praise the saints.

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