

# Bristol Conference 1977-05 msg.and Man of Model Ch.

by Stan Ford

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*The sermon encourages believers to remain steadfast in their faith, avoiding disillusionment, defeat, and dejection as they await the coming of the Lord.*

**Duration:** 43:43

**Scripture:** Acts 17:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:2

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Faith Endurance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not being disillusioned, defeated, or dejected in our Christian experience. He highlights the need to have a proper understanding of the coming of the Lord and not be swayed by conflicting interpretations. The preacher encourages the audience to be kinder to one another and strive to be model Christians in their assembly. He also emphasizes the importance of applying the message in their hearts and lives, allowing Christ to be seen in them. The sermon is based on an epistle that addresses all men and women, reminding them not to be disillusioned or defeated, but to stand firm in their faith.

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## Transcript

1 Thessalonians. We will read from verse 14. Now we exhort you brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men. Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the spirit, despise not prophesying, prove all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from all appearance of evil.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Brethren, pray for us, greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Amen. Just a brief word of prayer. O God and Father, we sing so often, speak Lord, for thy servant herein.

Speak just now some message to meet our needs that thou only dost know. O speak Lord, through thy holy word, and may I see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. And what we sing we pray in the Saviour's name.

Amen. If there is one verse in this wonderful chapter that always captivates me, it's the verse which is number 27. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

You see, it seems to me the Apostle sums up the writing of this wonderful letter by daring to say he is not just writing to a selected few. He is not just directing his remarks to some that others will say, they needed that message. I'm sure you would never be one of those people, would you? I mean, you'd never walk out of a meeting or a service and say, do you know that just suited brother so-and-so? That just suited brother so-and-so? But just in case we would, not that we would, but just in case we would, the Apostle dares to say he wants this to be read to all the holy brethren.

So there is something in this epistle is there not for every one of us. God is not speaking to an isolated few, but he's speaking to all men and women. Now I want us to look at the epistle and as we go through it, and we will only be able to deal with it in somewhat of a brief manner, but as we go through it, I wonder if I may just point out one or two simple things.

It seems to me that in those first three verses, the Apostle is saying, don't be disillusioned. Now I repeat that. It seems to me he's saying, don't be disillusioned.

And then it seems to me in verses 4 to 8, he is saying, and don't be defeated. And then it seems to me when we come to verses 9 and 11, or 9 to 11, he is saying, and don't be dejected. If there are three things that mar our Christian experience and the joy of the Lord in our soul, surely these are the three things, that men become disillusioned, that men become defeated, and men become dejected.

But praise God, God doesn't want any of these things to mar our Christian experience. Of course, the disillusion here is the disillusion that so often comes to men and women when they think of the coming of the Lord. Over these past few years, there have been more books come from the press on the coming of the Lord than almost any time since this subject gripped the hearts of the church.

But the great tragedy is this, that it depends what book you're reading as to what you think is going to happen. This is one of the thrills of listening to Brother Morgan, as he's opened the Word and has kept strictly to that which the Word of God has to say. I'm not saying about his illustrations, but for those American ones, I've sat with my mouth open.

But there it is. I do know this, anyway. I do know that never have there been days when there have been more books published on this matter.

And the Apostle dares to say to the church in those opening verses, but of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. By the way, is it interesting? If what the 17th chapter of Acts says is true, and the Apostles spent three Sabbaths in Thessalonica, they got onto the meat of the Word pretty quick, didn't they? Oh, by the way, I've got to fly. Oh, what a luxury.

Pardon? There we are. I mean, I could have stood there all the time and sort of endured it, but I'm not going to. Isn't it remarkable that they had a grasp of divine and great truth? It seems to me to be saying that you do not need to be on the road for many years, and distilled as only comes with years of study in

the knowledge of the Scripture, to appreciate the fact that Jesus Christ is coming back again.

To appreciate the fact that God has not left this world alone. That the man that they nailed upon a cross, as the blood and spittle ran down his face, they cried, we'll not have this man to reign over us. He will reign.

He who's right it is to reign. And we can appreciate that, each one of us, here this very morning. He doesn't want us to be disillusioned.

He doesn't want us to be disillusioned first about the event. He is not speaking now - he has done that in the fourth chapter - he is not speaking now about the rapture. He is speaking now about that which he dares to call the day of the Lord.

It is the day of the Lord that will come as a thief in the night. It is the day of the Lord that will bring sudden destruction, as one who is in cavail at the birth of a child. And I think it does us good just to sit down and contemplate those things.

May I be permitted just to take five minutes and remind you of your Sunday school Bible class. I think it's important, especially amongst younger folk, that we shall keep in the back of our mind the general outline of God's prophetic plan. It is not difficult to remember it.

There are many things we don't understand. There are some things that to us will be dim as we gaze at them. But there are great points which are as such.

And you know that God has spoken in his word of days. Periods of time. Not 24 hours, but periods of time.

We are today living, says 2 Corinthians 6 and 2, in the day of salvation. What a day to live in. To be able to tell men and women that Jesus saved.

To hold it forth that he's a wonderful Savior. But the day of salvation is going to come to its close. And the day of salvation is coming to its close with the day of Christ.

Philippians 1 and 6. 1 Corinthians 1 and 8. The day of Christ. The day of Christ, as you know, never has any statement concerning earth. Whenever the day of Christ is mentioned, it is associated with heaven.

It begins with the rapture of the church. The church is called out to face the blessed Christ at the judgment seat. The rewards are given out, and every man shall receive praise of God.

There is the marriage supper of the Lamb. There is the presentation to the Father. And all this happens in the day of Christ.

While the day of Christ is in heaven, upon earth there's another day. It is the day of Jacob's trouble. When Jeremiah writes of the day of Jacob's trouble, again and again and again, he brings before us the fact that it's Israel.

It's Jacob. This happens not in heaven, but on earth. But the day of Jacob's trouble and the day of Christ come to their conclusion at the same time.

When He shall come, the day of the Lord, He shall come in great power and glory. And there shall be ushered into this scene the day of the Lord, that day that begins with judgment and ends with judgment, 2

Peter 3 and 10. That day of a thousand years of rain.

Oh, what a glorious day that will be. The day of the Lord. The day of the Lord.

But remember, the day of the Lord comes to its close. I feel like shouting hallelujah. Oh, I do.

The day of the Lord comes to its close. The day of the Lord comes to its close with the great day of our God. That eternal state.

Oh, brethren, sisters, I feel almost like stopping a while and talking about the eternal state. The difficulty is I don't know much about it. I'd like to talk about it though, wouldn't you? If you want to know something about the eternal state, I'll tell you what to do.

Go home and read the opening chapters of Genesis, because that's where the eternal state is. What God planned in the beginning, or purposed in the beginning, and sin and Satan marred, one day is going to be fulfilled. For the devil hasn't got a victory, he's a defeated foe, blessed be his name.

We're waiting for the day when he shall be completely dealt with. One day on Calvary, his power was dealt with. One day his person is going to be dealt with.

I like that verse, don't you? You know, if I hear my grandchildren say one to another, shut up. Ooh, I need to sing the chorus, let me be a little kinder. I hate that expression, and yet I love it in the Bible, don't you? And he'll shut him up.

Ooh, praise God, there's coming a day when he's going to shut him up, and what a day that eternal day will be, when the fulfillment of all the purposes of God will be seen, and God shall be all in all. Oh, brethren, sisters, don't be disillusioned about things. Remember that while there may be, even among God-lit Bible-loving men, some slight difference of interpretation in prophetic things, remember that these are the great points, the day of salvation, the day of Christ, the day of the Lord, the day of our God.

And we're looking forward to that day. And here he speaks of the ushering in of the day of the Lord. He says, don't be disillusioned about the event, I'm talking of the day of the Lord.

And he says, don't let's forget the effect that when the Lord comes back for his own, the dead shall rise, the believers that remain are removed, we are reunited and rewarded. But in the day of the Lord hearken, and when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. I thank God I'm not going to be there.

Hallelujah. For there's no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Ye boys, ye boys.

I was saying just the other day, and I was surprised how afterwards two or three brethren came to this. I made this statement. I'd like to make it again, because when folks sort of come to me questioning, I like to repeat it.

But I said, it's important for us to remember this, that nowhere in the Bible are we told that sin can be forgiven. Hallelujah, the sinner can be forgiven, but sin must be punished. That's why Jesus Christ went to hell.

That's why he died. That's why the psalmist said, he has not dealt with us according to our sin, nor rewarded us according to our iniquity, but he dealt with another. And I thank God that though the day of

the Lord will usher in such blessing to earth and to heaven, we won't be there to face that sudden destruction.

Maybe we'll come with him. Shall I tell you what will happen then? Well, ask me when the day arrives. Let's move on.

He does not want us to be disillusioned. He does not want us to be defeated. Verses 4 to 8, But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Ye are all the children of light and the children of day. Ye are not of night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, for they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night.

And let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, thank God for that.

He says don't let's be defeated. He says we're not children. We're not children of the night.

We're not children of darkness. We're children of the day and we're children of light. There seems to be so much darkness in the world.

Isn't that right? I think you will grant me, if we read our Bible, there were days of darkness for many of God's people. I say there was that darkness of an unknown purpose in the story of Job. Oh, as day passed into day, and his wealth had gone, and his family had gone, and his health had gone, and even his wife turns and says, oh curse God and die.

Say goodbye to God and die. Oh, I say what darkness there was. Lord, why is it happening to me? What's your purpose? I don't understand.

But light cometh in the morning. Hallelujah. You were taught, were you not? And it has been said by every preacher that one of the great things about the story of Job is that when it was all happening, Job didn't know the first chapter and Job didn't know the last chapter.

But hallelujah, he came to know the last chapter and received double for all that he'd lost. We are not children of the night and if sometimes there comes upon us the darkness of an unknown purpose and we wonder why it's happening to us, brethren, sisters, we're not children of the night. We're not going to dwell there.

God's going to bring us out. We'll understand it better by and by. Do you know, I was most interested, I was most interested at, well, where I've been in Durham, Northgate.

I was along there for the first week with little children, you know. I had a great time with Edom, just having. And in their handicraft, the girls were doing some, what do they call it? No, not crochet, no, no, you wouldn't know, mother, you wouldn't know.

Yes, cross-stitch, cross-stitch, embroidery. Yeah, embroidery. And you know, they had this little thing and they were, oh, dearie me, they were wonderful, really.

Didn't prick themselves at all. I'd have pricked myself the first time. But there it was, they were doing this and I picked one up, and you know, it was an absolute jumble.

I couldn't make head of the tail of it. I thought, boy, this girl's not getting on very well. And then I turned it round.

I'd been looking at the backside. And when I turned it round, do you know what they were doing? What was it they were doing? Oh, you weren't there, were you? God is love. Oh, on the backside, it was just a jumble of threads.

There was no, you couldn't read God is love on the back. But when you turned it over, life gets like that sometimes, doesn't it? It's such a jumble, sometimes silk and thread, full of lovely colors, but such a jumble, no purpose. But one day we'll turn it over and we'll God is love.

God is love. If there was a darkness, indeed, of an unknown purpose, there was the darkness of an unknown pathway. Would I be right in saying that's the story of Joseph? What a story is the story of Joseph, and yet he didn't know the pathway.

He went out to serve his father. He went out to serve his brethren. He went out with provision and news.

And all they did was to take him and throw him down into a pit. They dragged him away and sold him as a slave. They put him into prison.

Oh, the darkness of an unknown pathway. What ever is the Lord doing with me? Yet like cometh in the morning, for he became the provider of that which would save a nation. And the blesser of countless multitudes.

You wonder sometimes the pathway you're going. Listen, we're not children of the night. We're not children of the night.

We're children of the day, and God's not going to leave us in the night. I say there's another one, isn't there? You've had this one, sister, haven't you? You've had the darkness of unanswered prayer. You've had that one.

We've all had that one, haven't we? There's someone we've prayed for. There's something we've prayed for. And we've knelt and we've cried to God.

And if ever there was anyone that knew the darkness of that, it was Mary and Martha, wasn't it? Their brother. He was the provider for the family. He was the one they loved.

He's dead. And worse than that, the Bible says his body's stinking. But when the Lord could have done something, when he was still alive, though cast maybe in pain, they set for the Lord, and the Lord wasn't very far away.

He could have come. He could have arrived in time. But he didn't do it.

Oh, Lord, you've answered so many people's prayer. I've seen you do so many wonderful things for other people, but Lord, I need you now. Lord, our brother.

Unanswered prayer. And we're not children of the darkness, we're children of the light. Children of the day.

And isn't it wonderful that although tragedy came, when he came, he performed the miracle of miracles. Lazarus was raised from the dead, and you and I stand back today and say, what a Savior, able to raise even the stinking body of a man. Jesus had never done that to Lazarus.

We could never have said it now, could we? You see, he's not only looking at us, he's looking at others. He cares for the whole body. Isn't it wonderful when sometimes we feel, well, Lord, maybe you're using me to bring glory to your name in the lives of others.

Oh, isn't it easy for a person who hadn't suffered very much and thought like that. Shall I tell you something? As a dear brother, we see him about the conference platform, conference grounds, don't we? And he's pushed in a chair. Have you heard him complain? Every time I see him, I say, how are you? Oh, very well.

God bless him and his wife. Do you mean to tell me they haven't prayed? Of course they have. Maybe it doesn't bring them any comfort, but I want to tell them this.

They've been a blessing to me this week. A blessing to me. I say, don't let's be defeated.

Don't let's be as those who sleep. Those who sleep. I was telling the children, you know, the story of Samuel.

Lovely story, Samuel, isn't it? And he was asleep and God called him, Samuel. And I told the youngsters, you know, that's exactly it, isn't it? That's exactly the description of those of us who don't know the Lord. Asleep.

And I said to the boys and girls, you go to bed, you put your head on the pillow and you're asleep and suddenly the one that loves you more than she loves her own life comes into your bedroom and looks at you. You don't even know she's there. The man who provides for you, who cares for you, comes in and looks at you and you don't even know he's there.

It doesn't mean mummy stopped loving you. It doesn't mean daddy stopped caring for you, I said to the children. It just means you don't know it.

And there are some Christians and they're asleep. They're Christians, they're in the family, but somehow they've forgotten that God cares. They've forgotten that God loves.

They're not living in the enjoyment of it. They're asleep. He says, don't be asleep.

Let's get out and enjoy the Lord. But day by day, no wonder later on he says, in all things give thanks. Let's enjoy the Lord.

You know, this is one of the tragedies I find among so many Christians, that we gather like this and don't we enjoy it? And we sort of say one to another, well, you know, I'm going to the meeting and I'm going to meet with the Lord. Shall I tell you something? I met with the Lord before I came to the meeting. I hope I brought him with me.

He told me he'd never leave me nor forsake me. He told me he'd come into my heart. I remember years ago when Billy Graham organization sent round some of these calendars and they sent a calendar of a picture of Mrs. Graham at the sink.

I'm blushing on it. Anyway, it was a picture of their sink. And above the sink in the kitchen was this slogan.

Divine service held three times a day here. And I said to Mary, I said, you know, my dear, we have our Bible reading morning and evening, but they have it three times a day. And she looked at me, you know, like she has no habit of doing, cut you down to size.

And she said, it doesn't mean that. Well, what does it mean? It means that when she does the washing up, that's divine service. Is that right? Does it mean we just live with the Lord in meetings? Then we don't live with him very long, do we? But if we live with him moment by moment, hallelujah, this is what he says.

Don't be defeated and don't be dejected. For he says this, that whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together. And this is the reason because he died.

I think that's important, verse 10, don't you? I think that is most important. He dares to say this, pardon me, the wind's blown the page over. He dares to say this, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

I want to ask a question. Most of the commentators say this, don't they? They say that what he's speaking of is that whether we die, we sleep, or whether we're alive, when Christ comes, then all will be well. Why do they suddenly change the sleep, which is not the sleep of death in the previous verses, now to a sleep of death? I want to tell you this, I don't believe in a partial rapture.

I don't believe when the Lord comes back it will depend on my faithfulness whether I go. I believe it will depend on the fact that Christ died for me. And that and that alone.

And I praise God for that fact. And I'm not going to be, I'm not going to be dejected. I'm going to walk through this scene and say, Lord, when I see you, I want to be able to say, oh God, I made so many mistakes.

I failed in so many points, but I did the best I could. I did the best I could. And Lord, if I'm here at all, it's all because of you, what you've done.

Don't be dejected, brethren. Let's go forth with our faces shining and our backs upright. Let's go forth to enjoy the Lord.

But then he goes on and he dares to tell us to do something else. For having dealt with the fact of our disillusionment and our defeat, and indeed our dejection, then he goes on and tells us something to do. Oh, he tells us not what to do.

He tells us don't, don't, don't. Now he tells us there's something for you to do. And first of all, you are coming to the Bible reading this afternoon, aren't you? Verse 12, he says this, you appreciate your elders.

You appreciate your elders. And I think this is wonderful. We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves.

I think that's wonderful. Those who love us and care for us and admonish us. You know, yesterday, and dear welcome, if we went too far, forgive us, sir.

We didn't mean to. We didn't mean to. But yesterday, it seems that most of us were reminded that there's a time, and you folks have come for a holiday as well as a conference, and we've no way to keep you here longer than we should, you know.

The man that admonished us was a man who loved us. And I'll tell you something, I wouldn't have taken it from him if I didn't know that. Not me.

Amen. And this is it, isn't it? That in the assembly of God's people, there are those that rule over us, and correct us, and correct us. Thank you, sir, for the correction.

Thank you for the correction. I say, not only does he dare to say we must appreciate our elders, esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. But he goes on, and he gives not only an appreciation of elders, but advice for the unruly.

He says, you warn them. You warn them. We don't often see that, do we? Do you know, in the years I've known the Saviour, I have never seen in the home field any public warning given to God's people.

Public correction. I've seen it in the mission field. I won't say where, but I was in one assembly where an elder in the meeting was told to be in the meeting.

He lost his temper and smacked his wife. And I can see him now as he sat there. And he was publicly rebuked.

And then he went further, and they said, because of his action, no longer will be accounted as an elder. And then you should have heard his wife, who reportedly, no, no, no, no. She didn't want that.

She didn't mind him being rebuked, but didn't want him to have taken from the company of elders. Those that are unruly, rebuke. I say he goes further.

He says, not only appreciate elders, not only advise the unruly, but acquire the character of the Lord. Oh, please, I've nothing to say about it. No one can put it better than God's put it.

I don't need to preach it. I don't need to proclaim it. All I need to do is read it.

Let's turn then to verse 15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man. But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men.

May I say it? Let us be a little kinder. Let us be a little blinder to the thoughts of those around us. Let us praise a little more.

Let us be, when we are weary, just a little bit more cheery. Think a little more of others and a little less of me. Don't render evil for evil.

If someone does and says something to us that's hurtful, don't let spring back to say something hurtful to them. And I tell you, brethren and sisters, it's not easy to do that is it? And if you had my character, you'd know it's not easy. You'd know it's not easy.

But oh, praise God, it's possible for Christ died. It's no good me looking and saying I can't help it. Of course I can't help it.

I was speaking the other day about this business we call temper, you know. Just in case you didn't know, we've got a queen in our country, you know, a queen. Just in case you didn't know.

Now, if she came down to our village, everyone would be out on the street to look at her. Just imagine for a moment, she walks down the street and suddenly she snaps on my toe with high heels. I wouldn't lose my temper, would I? Do you know what I'd do? Every time I'd preach, I'd say, do you see that queen? Not much good saying we can't help losing our temper.

Not really. He says, don't you render evil for evil. He says, you rejoice evermore.

Good, I can rejoice evermore. I've caught the fly. The difficulty is I've just said don't render evil for evil.

But brethren, sisters, please. He says, rejoice evermore. Isn't it grand to rejoice? Haven't we so much to rejoice for? I mean, you look out there.

Do you remember that old story I told you about the Welshman who sold cheddar gorge in my country for the first time? He took his hat off and he held it to his chest and he said, well done God, well done. Do you feel like that? Aren't there so many things to rejoice? Don't you feel like rejoicing when you just meet the one and only? God, for just a week, has permitted us to have such wonderful fellowship. We may have to go back into the world to face those who reject the Savior, but isn't it grand that he just shows us what it can be? Just whets our appetite.

Oh, rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. Brother, that doesn't mean for you to do that in the prayer meeting.

But it does mean, it does mean that we shall be constantly in the attitude of prayer. Constantly in the attitude of prayer. I love that.

I love that. I remember the story of a very, very dear brother away in Holbert in Tasmania. He was there in the meeting and a brother got up and started to pray and he took him for what we call a cook's tour, you know.

Started off in Tasmania, went over to Australia, came up, went right around the world and carried on for 20 minutes. And when he sat down, a brother arose and in rather a squeaky voice he said, Dear Lord, our brother has forgotten the cannibals in the Solomon Islands. Bless the cannibals in the Solomon Islands.

Whatever my wife thinks I've gone on praying too long, she says, Solomon Islands. No, but be in the attitude of prayer. Be in the attitude of prayer.

He says, quench not the spirit. It's easy to quench the spirit, isn't it? You see that young fellow and he's just enjoying the Lord. He stands up and leads the saints in worship and somehow he gets mulled up a little bit, you know.

He talks about the father who died on the cross and he, and he, and he, and he, and afterwards. Quench not the spirit. I have a high priest in glory that presents my worship to the father and I need him.

Don't let us be critical when someone does the best they can. Let's say amen for what we can say. Quench not the spirit, despise not prophecies, prove all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from the smallest of evils.

And he dares to say this, and our God will sanctify you, spirit, soul and body. I say, you Thessalonians, read it to everyone. Read it to everyone.

God grant that each one of us may find ourselves doing our bit to make the assembly with which we are connected a model church. Amen. Oh, brother, come on, lead this.

This will be the last time they sing it for you. Let's enjoy it. Let's ask brother Kent to lead us to the throne of grace and full of praise.

Our God and our father, we come before thee. Truly our hearts are moved by this message to be a little kinder to each other and to be model Christians in our assemblies to make our gatherings before they model gatherings to this world. Oh, father, speak to each one of our hearts through this message.

Let it not be snatched away by the things that go on today and after this meeting. Apply these things in our hearts and lives and let Christ in us be seen and let us be all that have us to be in this world. Strengthen us now and keep us and cause us to honor these things and be all that have us to be, father.

Thank you for this message God has given us and that we might work for the approved of God degree in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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