

The Second Coming 11 Be Ye Also Ready

by Stan Ford

The sermon calls believers to be ready for the imminent return of Christ by living faithfully and sharing the Gospel.

Duration: 48:35

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Christian Readiness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing and walking with Jesus Christ. He shares three stories of individuals who spent their last 24 hours on earth working for God. The speaker urges the audience to consider how they would spend their last 24 hours and encourages them to have a personal relationship with Jesus. He highlights the significance of witnessing for God and reminds the listeners that they cannot effectively serve Him without truly knowing Him.

Transcript

And yet you came along, and you came along, and I knew that many of you weren't hearing me, and you weren't understanding me, but you were there to be supporting me. You know, it's so easy to support when you can hear everything, but when you don't know what you're supporting, it's a bit of a job, isn't it? But you came along, and may I say thank you. May the Lord bless you.

I want to read this evening a few verses from the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians, chapter fifteen, if I may be. We will commence reading in verse fifty-one.

Behold, I show you a mystery. Ye shall not all sleep, but ye shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. For when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, thy victory! The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Lord. But pass thee to God, which giveth up the victory to our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

For as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. May the Lord just grant his blessing to the reading of his own precious Word. Will you join me in prayer? O God and Father, as we have vowed before thee evening by evening to ask thy blessing, and then at the close of the day we've been able to say thank you for your help, so we vow before thee again this evening with a confidence that thy will, in thy wonderful mercy, bless my work.

Speak then, while hearts are grand, for Jesus' sake. Amen. If there is one thing that I have been trying to prep home over the past evenings, it is this, that because the Lord Jesus is reliable, because he is God with us, over all, blessed forever, his Word can be trusted, and his promises are sure.

We have seen again, and again, and again, and then again, that the Lord himself, in so many different ways, over so much time, has promised that one day he will return, first to catch his own to be with him, and then to sit on the throne of his father David, and reign over the house of Jacob. Again, I am sure that most of you in this service would have been very thankful if I'd been able to stand up here and tell you when the Lord Jesus Christ was coming back again. But I confess, right at the beginning, I would be unable to do that, for the Lord has informed us that if any say here is for Christ or there, we must believe him not.

I don't know when Jesus Christ is coming back again. I want to say this from the depth of my heart, but after a daily reading of the Word of God for so many years, I know of no prophecy that yet has to be fulfilled before Jesus Christ would come back again, or not many prophecies. But I know of none that has yet to be fulfilled before Jesus Christ comes back again.

I believe that he could break the air at this very night. I believe that what I'm speaking to you is, is it possible for us who love the Lord to be caught up to meet him? For though I don't know the day, and I don't know the hour, there is one thing that over many years has challenged my heart. I would like it to challenge yours tonight.

It is this. If I look at my watch, I find it two minutes past eight o'clock. Is it laying within my power, is absolute certainty to tell you that before two minutes past eight tomorrow night, Jesus Christ would come back again? How would you spend your last 24 hours? Now, could I repeat that? If I could tell you, I can't.

I can't. But if I could tell you with absolute certainty that in 24 hours time, Jesus Christ would come back again, how would you spend your last 24 hours? Oh, I've got a strong feeling that there may be some here this night who immediately would drop on their knees and say, Oh, God save me! Make me ready for your return. Grant that I may be found amongst those who will meet me in the air.

Maybe tonight there will be some here so filled with emotion as they think of brethren and sisters, of mothers and fathers, of children who know not Christ, that they would wish to run from this building, jump in their car, go as fast as they could to someone they know and someone they love and say to them, Oh, please, please, won't you touch Christ? He's coming back again in 24 hours. Of course, I don't know what you did, and you don't know what I did. I only know this, that the word of God gives me a tremendous force as to how I ought to spend the last 24 hours.

There are three stories I would like to share with you. Maybe we will break into four, but there are three stories I would like to share with you. Stories of men who spent their last 24 hours.

I want us to see how they spent their 24 hours. As I open my Bible and ponder its truth, I believe that one of the greatest stories contained in the Bible is the story of the man called Enoch, who walked with God and walked not. The man who preached the coming of the Lord, the man who dared to stand and cry, Behold, he cometh with ten thousand in his place.

This man died not. I love the story away in the book of Genesis, where we ponder the truth of this man. You know, it's like going for a walk through a graveyard, isn't it? You remember how the chapter tells us the name of one after another, one after another, one after another, and then says this, and he died, and he died, and he died, and he died, and he died.

And then suddenly, we think of a man called Enoch, who walked with God, and he didn't die. And you feel you could jump on every tombstone in that graveyard and say, oh, hallelujah, someone hasn't died. But what happened to this man, Enoch? What happened? As sure as the day will dawn when Christ will return and catch his own to be with him, so Enoch was taken by the Lord from this scene and carried back into glory.

The New Testament tells us that the story is true. As I open my Bible, I am not unmindful that the Scripture speaking of Enoch says this of him, that he was a man who sees God. And every one of you were taught in your Sunday school, you were taught in your Bible class, you have been taught in your assembly, that there are only two men in the whole of the Bible who have this testimony, they see God.

Only two men in the whole Bible. And you know who the other one was. If it was said of Enoch, he sees God, the only other person of whom it is said he sees God was the Lord Jesus himself.

The Lord Jesus himself. And this man had come in contact with the very Christ before Christ had ever come to this scene and was so influenced that he did that which was like the Lord. He sees God.

He sees God. And he walks with God. Oh, the wonder of it all.

What a fellowship! What a fellowship! The first thing I want to remind you of about this man who walks with God is that he hasn't always walked with God. Now, may I emphasize that. I want to talk to some of you folk in this parish who've been brought up in Christian homes, who've been raised among folk who love the Lord, and when I ask you, have you trusted the Savior, you say, I've always trusted him.

Did you know you are my dear Enoch? For Enoch walked with God. He pleased God. But he hadn't always pleased God, and he hadn't always walked with God.

Enoch began to walk with God at the birth of his son, Abubalam. The Bible tells us that when he was 300 years of age, he begat a son, and he called his name Abubalam. And after he had begat a son, he walked with God 300 years.

I have a feeling tonight that maybe that ought to be my text. I have a feeling tonight I ought to look into your faces, and as a grandfather, as a father, I ought to say to you the responsibility of our children ought to drive us to walk with God. Is there a father here that conducts his household as God would have him conducted without God's help? Is there a mother here that can raise her children in the nocturnal admonition of the Lord, without the Lord's help? If there is one thing that this, your nation, needs, if there is one thing that our nation, my nation, needs, it is this, that we shall have men and women, parents, who can set our children an example.

The only way we can do it is by realizing that we cannot walk with God, we cannot walk with God until first we meet him, that we know him. Beck, do you know God? Miller, do you know God? I was conducting a gospel crusade away in the city of Swansea in South Wales. Night by night, the chapel building that we were using was crowded, the gallery as well.

There were from 1,200 there every night. As the evening passed by, I preached one evening on the tremendous grace on the gospel of God. The master is calm and callous to me.

And as I drew the service to its close, the gallery was filled mainly with young people. My wife will remember it so well, for she was there. And I looked up at the gallery and I said to that crowd of young folk, you young folk, for the sake of your parents, trust Jesus Christ.

I came down from the pulpit and rendered my way to the mess. We had the joy of pointing the number to the Savior that night. The next evening I returned to the service persuaded that God was working.

Just before I entered that chapel building, a knock at the door. Two young women, about 19, 20 years of age, I'm not sure if there is. Mr. Ford, could we have a word with you? I don't normally speak to folk before a service.

I said, well, if you'll bring it by, I'll be happy to speak with you. Mr. Ford, night by night, you've looked up at us in the gallery and you've said, for the sake of your parents, will you trust Christ? Would you look down in the body of the hall tonight and say to our parents, for the sake of your children, will you trust Christ? For we both love the Lord, but our parents don't. And they'll be here tonight.

For the sake of your children, will you trust Christ? This is wonderful. He not for the sake of his child began to walk with God. Have you? Have you? What fellowship he walked with God! What faith! Oh, what faith! You see, that faith meant that walking with God, he not only was going to listen to God and talk to God, but he was going to show by his whole attitude that he trusted in that God.

Oh, friends, I do not believe that salvation is just the raising of your hand in a gospel service. That can be a help, but please don't come to me and tell me you've trusted Christ. If you want to do that, then please, please, please, go back to your work tomorrow.

Go back to your school. Go back to your college. Best of all, go back to your own and show them that you've trusted Christ.

Live it! Have a faith that works! He not had a faith that made him walk with God. Such a faith that he was willing not only to talk with the Lord, but listen to him. How else would he have known that the Lord was coming with ten times the limit of faith? I challenge every Bible student here tonight to go home and read the opening chapters of Genesis and show me where there were ten times in verse in those verses.

You'll have a job that's ten to a hundred. He not so walked with God and touched with his faith that he believed the unbelievable. He did the undoable.

He saw the unseeable and expected the unexpected. He cried, Behold, he cometh with ten thousand of his faith. Friend, have you got a faith like that? Have you got a faith that says, Lord, if you said it, I believe it.

If you promised it, I will approve. He not so. But when I think of his fellowship he walked with God and I think of his faith.

Oh, please listen. I think of his pain. What pain? To be numbering amongst those that were called home to be with the Lord.

I don't know what you want in the way of pain. I haven't a faintest idea. I only know bits of love, everything else I love.

I love that we may be caught up with those that love the same. I've had to put one last thinking as they were leaving. They said, Fran, I'm sorry.

We'll be unable to be with you tonight. The Lord bless you. And I shook them on a hand and said, well, either here, there, or in there we'll meet again.

Oh, how true that is. How true that is. Wouldn't it be grand if we met again.

Oh, Fran, I look at this man Enoch and do you know what he did in the last 24 hours of his life? Are you listening now? Are you listening? I want to drive this out. I remember the first time in my experience when first converted one of the elders of our own meeting spoke along the line I'm speaking this evening and he drove it home to my heart and I've never forgotten it. He said, I'll tell you what Enoch did the last 24 hours of his life.

He did what he'd been doing for 300 years. He walked with God. Nothing spectacular.

Nothing unusual. He just put one foot in front of the other. And he walked with God.

Oh, Lord, enable me to walk with thee. And please, you can't walk with God until you know God, until you've met God, until you've yielded your life to God, until you've prayed with Abraham or with Enoch. I'll walk with God.

There was a man who walked with God. His name was Enoch. You've all heard the little Sunday School story of the youngster who came home one day and mum said, what lesson did you have today? And the little lad, he said, oh, we had a lesson of a man who walked with God until God said, Enoch, you've come away too far from your home.

You better come on to my home. You come with me. You come with me.

I'm longing for the day when the Lord will say, you come with me. Enoch walked with God. That's how he spent the last 24 hours doing what he'd been doing for 300 years.

If there was a man who walked with God, there was a man who witnessed for God. You know who I'm thinking of, don't you? They called his name Noah. Or there's a sense in which he was not taken home and Enoch was taken home.

But he was a man who was delivered from the punishment and the judgment of God just as the rapture of the church will deliver it from the punishment of God. He was a man selected with those of his family that believed. And isn't it wonderful to know that what he did during the last 24 hours of his life was what he'd done for 120 years.

He carried on witnessing for God. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, we've got this part, tell us of this man. Tell us of this man who witnessed.

Would you notice how he witnessed? He witnessed, first of all, by trusting God's word. God had said, Go now. God had told him the most ridiculous thing.

I expect there are some of you here tonight who in the past nights have said that you've left this place. You know, that must have been ridiculous. Fancy believing that the grains are going to open and the birds are going to rise.

Fancy believing that someone walking down the road will suddenly be caught up. Fancy, fancy, fancy believing. While fancy believing that God was going to send rain out of heaven.

Oh, to you and me, there's nothing strange about that. Especially if you come from my country. Oh, dearie me.

Nothing strange about rain coming from heaven. But don't you forget that before Noah's time, no rain had ever come from heaven. Don't you forget that God, the Bible has said, watered the earth with heavy dew.

There was no rain that fell from heaven on suddenly Noah's plans in place. There's water coming out of heaven. I almost could hear the people say, Ah, yes, a pig's fly will have to shoot for pork.

I don't believe that. Somewhere there's rain coming out of heaven. But here was a man who trusted God.

My friend, I want to tell you, I trust God. I made reference the other evening to Dr. Walter Wilson. And you all know his lovely story, don't you? Occasion when going one day to speak at a school auditorium, he turned to step with a young girl who had on his arm, or rather, a young man who had on his arm a girl with ginger hair.

As they walked down the road together, the doctor said, You're going to school? Yes, said the young fellow. We've got to go and listen to some religious lecture. He didn't know that was the lecturer.

Oh, said Dr. Wilson, Don't you like religious lectures? Go on, said the young fellow. I don't believe it unless I can understand it. And when it comes to things religion, I can't understand it.

So I don't believe it. I don't know what the young fellow felt like when he looked up to see the principal of the school sitting by his side, the man that he'd walked down the road with. I don't know what he thought when Dr. Walter Wilson stood up to speak and looking right at the young man, he said, On my way to the school auditorium today, I turned and stepped with a young man who had on his arm a girl with ginger hair.

He told me he couldn't believe again unless he understood it. I wonder if he'd be kind enough in the auditorium to stand up and tell us how a white, or rather a black cow, eats green grass, which makes white milk, which in turn becomes yellow butter, and which eaten by a girl puts ginger hair on her head. It's a bit of a mystery, isn't it? But you see, I believe in mysteries.

Every day of my life, I believe in mysteries. I don't know how in a field a kitten can tap grass and put feathers on its back. A pig can pull away at the same grass and it'll put hair on its back.

I don't. I believe in mysteries. I believe that one day, Jesus Christ is coming back again.

And I like Noah. I believe the word of the Lord. I trust the word of the Lord.

Noah began to build his ark, but not only did he trust the word of the Lord, he triumphed. He triumphed, let there be God, over the laughter and ridicule of the crowd. I must not allow my imagination to run away with me.

I must not put in the Bible what's not there. I only know this, that if I could hang myself away on that hillside, listening to Noah as he told me that water was going to come out of heaven, and that hill would be covered with water, I will allow that to happen. I've a feeling that for 120 years, people laughed at Noah, that by his actions, he was a preacher of righteousness.

Saint Peter, he was a preacher, he was a preacher of righteousness. He trusted. He triumphed.

One day, he entered that ark and testified to all that he was going to spend his last 24 hours the way God had told him to. Oh, listen, friend, don't you forget this. God shut the door of the ark.

Noah didn't shut it. If Noah had shut it, Noah could have opened it. But God shut it, so Noah couldn't open it.

One day, when God sends him to this scene again, his blessed son, to catch his church to be with him, remember there is nothing you'll ever be able to do to make yourself a member of the body of Christ. It'll be too late. God will shut the door.

The man who spent the last 24 hours of his life was witnessing for God. And he not walked for 300 years, and not witnessed for 120 years. There's one other man.

His name was Elisha. And I could almost hear the cry of Elisha as he fell to the ground. So Elisha, who hath been the fiery chariot to heaven, fought for God, who early witnessed for God, that the marvel to my heart is this, that Elisha works for God.

Oh, I love to speak to the story of Elisha. I love to take men and women with heart of steel. I love to hear Elisha's prayer that came from Elisha's mouth.

That's God of Abraham, Elisha, and Israel. Oh, that's God of relationship. Oh, that's God of redemption.

Oh, that's God of regeneration. For he was the God to be crowned out of Jacob. Sing the prayer.

Oh, I love this hateful prayer. I want to remind you that that was not the most important part of the life of Elijah. The most important part of the life of Elijah was not in the first thirty years of his existence, but was in the last ten years of his existence when Elijah gathered around him the sons of the prophets.

And there this man of God took the sons of the prophets and ministered to the end of words and promises of God. The last twenty-four hours of his life he had a son of the prophets with him. Oh, praise God.

Now I want to make a statement here if I may. I want you to think about it. I know of nowhere in the word of God where God has receded it.

And as I look at the New Testament I see a Pole who took a Kennedy with him. I see an older man who took a younger man and ministered the things of God to him. You dare to have a talk with my wife afterward.

She'll tell you we had more and more young fellows that over the years have traveled with me and I sought to teach them the word of God. That's God's plan in the church and it's one worker for another seeking to teach God's word. And that's what Elijah did.

That's what Elijah did. He taught this young man Elijah the last ten years of his life. He worked for God and the last twenty-four hours of his life he worked for God.

He instructed this young man in the things of God. Suddenly the car, the chariot replied and the horseman thereof. I said as I began that I wanted to share three stories with you.

In actual fact I want to share one of them. I don't want just to talk to you about a man who walked with God, who witnessed for God, who worked for God. I don't just want to talk to you about the penalty for such a man and the fate of such a man and the pain of such a man.

I don't just want to remind you of he who suffered and triumphed and testified. I don't want just to remind you of a man who right to the very last moment of his day was ministering the truth of God to a young man who would carry his mantle. I want to remind you of a man who tried to do in twenty-four hours what he should have done in twenty-four years.

An utterly failed. Could I repeat that? What a common thing to say isn't it? But I want to remind you of a man we call God who for twenty-four years lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. For twenty-four years he knew God for the New Testament says of this man was the filthy communication of Sodom and Gomorrah.

That's the worst affair of all. He knew God and he knew the things of God but for twenty-four years he never told anyone about it. And then the last twenty-four hours came.

And then if you please, oh if you please God sent two angels down to the city saying, Lord, prepare for thy life. Carry on in time. Look up behind me.

That's how it comes through. And God rushed off to see his son-in-law. He had daughters.

And he went to see his son-in-laws to tell them that God was going to hurt Sodom and Gomorrah. Do you remember what the Bible said? Please, I didn't write the Bible. Nothing to do with me.

Do you remember what the Bible said? Those sons-in-laws of Lot. They looked at Lot. And he appeared unto them as one who lost.

In other words, they called him off his head. And he lived there twenty-four years never giving us a word of warning before. And now the last twenty-four hours he tells us he wants us to believe what he hasn't believed for twenty-four years and never spoken of.

No wonder he's there. Tonight, friends, I want to say it again. I believe God.

I believe God. For he who is God of all blessings forever. Says this, If I go, I will come again.

If I go, I will come again. Are you ready for it? Are you waiting for it? Are you watching for it? Then remember another verse. Of you I delight not.

All but we who love him waiting for his appearing may be found in clothes who walk and witness and hallelujah work for Jesus Christ. Remember, you can't walk for him until you know him. However can you

work for him until you know him.

And you couldn't tell a soul about him. You couldn't witness for him until you know him. So right now in the clothes of this earth I want to look to you in the face.

To the man, the men, women I want to say, friends, if Jesus Christ did come back in twenty-four hours would you be ready? Because he might come back in twenty-four minutes. If you've not trusted Christ, we have trusted you. For faith in Christ is like faith for it maintains.

I ask you, are clothes in him pleased? Have you any room for Jesus? What number was it, sir, please, you did tell me. 1-5-2 0, thank you. 1-5-0, please.

One hundred and fifty are clothes in him pleased. Or 1-4-8, we'll get there in a moment. We'll get there in a moment.

My fault, I lost a piece of paper, but they wrote it on. Have you any room for Jesus? Ye who, ye who bore your load of sin, have you not been asked this question? Sinner. Sinner.

We'll get that in a minute. Number 148. Have you any room for Jesus? The last verse of this new text.

Friend, will you take that Christ as your Savior? All this is between you and God. I'm not going to ask you to publicly confess. I'm asking you, will you before God, as you sit in your seat right where you are, before He who knows me in the most thoughtful of hearts, will you say to God, I'll swing wide the door of my heart to the King of kings.

God grant you this, as we sing this last verse. O man, I'm bound in to thee. It is hardly necessary for me to say that if tonight in this church someone takes the claims of Jesus Christ as their Savior, we'd love to hear that.

And if there's someone here tonight who's willing to do it but has not yet done it, someone who maybe thought they had, but have suddenly found out that they're not walking with God, that they're not witnessing to God, and they're not working for God because they don't know God, tonight you want to know. We've handed a story to institute you. Lord, I'll be standing in the front with my hands a few copies of that lovely little book there.

But all the way up south, come along, give us an opportunity of speaking with you. I would value your prayer if we leave tomorrow for Toyla City where we start on Sunday. I would value your prayer before we go down to the conference room and to where I've heard you.

We would value your prayer. But again, to our parents and organs, to every one of you, to our new receivers, to all of you who've worked so hard, thank you. And especially thank you to those who've worked so hard but it's all been behind the scenes where you haven't known it.

It's comparatively easy to work hard when people see it, you know. It's a fact of what I do. To our brethren and sisters here, who've hung knife-point knives and sat in those seats and you've been praying for them.

And I know you've been praying for them. There are those of you who've bought the plans and sold them out for the teachers, who've sold them and sought the help of the work of God. May the Lord bless you and the fellowship on which you've come.

I can't tonight stand up here and invite you to one fellowship. Of course I couldn't, I wouldn't. But in the back of that little list there are a number of fellowships whose names and addresses are given.

And if you're looking for Christian fellowships, if you're looking for a spiritual home, if I lived here in Augusta, I'd be to one of those places. Go along, make yourself known. Paul of St. George told you to come.

And if they don't welcome you, you write me a letter and I'll write them one too. Stick one on a bit of cardboard. I'd really like that.

Please, please, make use of that little leaflet. Try and get others to go with you. There's a testimony to the name of our God.

A foreign, bright day indeed. Shall we go? Oh God and Father, we bless thee together for thy work, for its tremendous challenge. We bless thee that tonight you not only challenge us, but you invite us to receive your salvation.

We pray thee to come good, and that we part one from another, but not from thee. May the love of God the Father and the grace of God the Son and the fellowship and communion of God the Holy Spirit lead the abiding in joy portion of all who love the Lord in sincerity and in truth, and are in good faith. And until that day shall dawn and these shadows be away, and we see him whose coming again takes place for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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